
Inventing Falsehood, Making Truth
Vico and Neapolitan Painting
MALCOLM BULL

Inventing Falsehood, Making Truth

ESSAYS IN THE *Arts*

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Inventing Falsehood, Making Truth

Vico and Neapolitan Painting

MALCOLM BULL

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS
Princeton and Oxford

Copyright © 2013 by Princeton University Press
Published by Princeton University Press, 41 William Street,
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
In the United Kingdom: Princeton University Press, 6 Oxford Street,
Woodstock, Oxfordshire OX20 1TW

press.princeton.edu

Jacket Art: Francesco Solimena (1657–1747), detail of *The Fall of Simon Magus*. Photo: Luciano Romano. S. Paolo Maggiore, Naples, Italy. Photo Credit: Scala / Art Resource, NY

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Bull, Malcolm.
Inventing falsehood, making truth : Vico and Neapolitan painting / Malcolm Bull.
pages cm. – (Essays in the arts)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-691-13884-8 (hardback)
1. Painting—Philosophy. 2. Art and philosophy—Italy—History—18th century. 3. Painting, Italian—Italy—Naples—18th century. 4. Painting, Baroque—Italy—Naples. 5. Vico, Giambattista, 1668–1744. 6. Truth. I. Title.
ND1140.B78 2013
759.5'73–dc23 2013015837

British Library Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available

This book has been composed in Garamond Premier Pro

Printed on acid-free paper. ∞

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

For Jill

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Acknowledgments

I am indebted to T. J. Clark, who posed the question this book attempts to answer, and to Hanne Winarsky of Princeton University Press for unexpectedly providing an opportunity to address it. Two long-standing interlocutors, David Carrier and Tom Nichols, encouraged the project from its inception. I am also grateful to Kristina Blagojevitch, who did the picture research, and to the editors at Princeton University Press who brought the manuscript to publication. The book is dedicated to Jill Foulston, my companion in Naples and elsewhere.

Prologue

The epigraph to the first chapter of E. H. Gombrich's *Art and Illusion* is a quotation from the eighteenth-century Swiss artist Jean-Étienne Liotard: "Painting is the most astounding sorceress. She can persuade us through the most evident falsehoods that she is pure Truth."[1] Gombrich argues that painters persuade viewers through their mastery of the techniques of illusion. This book explores another aspect of painting's magic: not its ability to simulate truth, but its capacity to change our perception of what truth is.

According to the Egyptologist Jan Assmann, the formative distinction in European civilization is the Mosaic one between religions that are true and those that are false. The crucial innovation that history attributes to Moses is not the categorization of particular religions as true or false but rather "the concept of a truth that does not supplement or augment other truths, but places everything else in a relation to untruth itself."[2] Before the Mosaic distinction, there were no false religions; thereafter, if one god was true, the others were false.

The Mosaic distinction was inherited by Christianity. Because Christianity was true, pagan religion was false, and in the course of a few centuries, the religions of the Greco-Roman world were eradicated. This meant that pagan idols were false too, and so they were destroyed as well. The position of nonpagan images was more ambiguous, but they were always suspect. As the eighth-century *Libri carolini* put it:

> Truth persevering always pure and undefiled is one. Images, however, by the will of the artist seem to do many things, while they do nothing . . . it is clear that they are artist's fictions and not the truth of which it is said: "And the truth will make you free."[3]

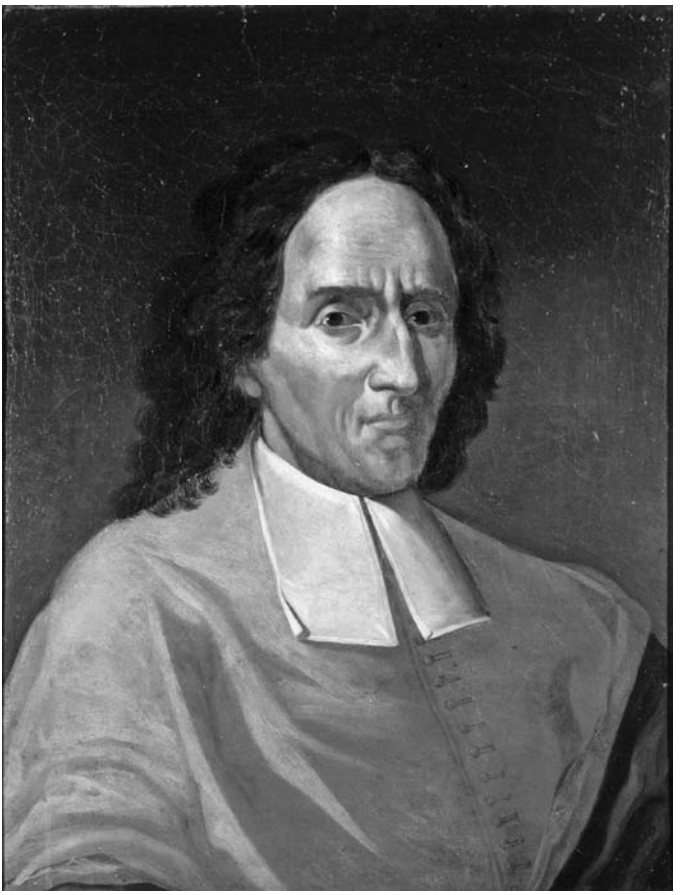
With varying degrees of theological urgency, images, idols, and false gods all posed the same philosophical problem: they represented things that did not exist. In this context, the increase in the number of images in the Renaissance, and the revival and diffusion of themes from classical mythology, embodied a complex challenge to Christian conceptions of truth. Painting was false because it was a representation rather than the reality, and mythological painting was doubly false because the things it represented—the gods and monsters of the ancient world—were themselves unreal.[4]

The presence within early modern Europe of an entire strand of cultural production that no one believed to be true put the Mosaic distinction under a degree of pressure. There were a variety of responses, ranging from iconoclasm to outright skepticism. But for one thinker, this explosion of images did not pose a problem; it suggested a solution. According to Giambattista Vico, writing in 1710, human truth is actually "like a painting." It is an astonishing claim if you set it alongside Daniello Bartoli's account of why his contemporaries prized paintings:

> We say this one is by the great Michelangelo, this one by Titian, and this other one by the divine Raphael and that they please all the more at the discovery that they deceive us imitating the true with the false, and telling the eyes as many lies, as the painter gives dabs of the brush to the canvas.[5]

That is just what Liotard was referring to when he said that "painting . . . can persuade us through the most evident falsehoods that she is pure Truth." But could painting ever be so persuasive as to persuade us that truth itself functions the same way?[6]

Inventing Falsehood, Making Truth



1.1.
After Francesco Solimena, *Portrait of Giambattista Vico*, Museo di Roma, Rome (© 2013 White Images / SCALA, Florence).

ONE

Vico

Giambattista Vico (figure 1.1) was born in Naples in 1668, the son of a bookseller.[1] Due to ill health, his education was a little haphazard, conducted partly at home and partly with the local Jesuits. He was an able student, however, and from 1686–95 he was employed as a private tutor, spending much of his time outside of Naples at the Rocca family property at Vatolla. During this period he was also enrolled in the faculty of jurisprudence at the University of Naples, from which he graduated with a doctorate in canon and civil law in 1694.

In 1699 he was appointed professor of rhetoric in the university and in this capacity delivered an annual inaugural oration; the seventh of these, *Study Methods of Our Time*, became his first significant publication in 1709, quickly followed by *On the Ancient Wisdom of the Italians* in 1710. Vico taught courses in rhetoric, from which his students' notes survive, now published as *The Art of Rhetoric*. However, he had larger ambitions, and set his sights on the more prestigious,

and much better paid, chair of civil law. With this in mind he published the three treatises that make up his *Universal Right* (1720–22). But in 1723 the job was given to someone else, and he remained in the chair of rhetoric until succeeded by his son in 1741.

Though he gave up hope of finding a better position in Naples, Vico was an active member of the various academies around which the flourishing intellectual life of the city centered in the early eighteenth century. And despite the fact that he never traveled, he had a measure of international recognition. There had been a favorable review of the first two parts of *Universal Right* in the *Bibliothèque Ancienne et Moderne*, a leading journal with a European readership, and Vico was clearly sufficiently well known to be asked to contribute an account of his intellectual development to a projected series of autobiographical writings by scholars, published in Venice in 1728. His major work, the *New Science*, first appeared in 1725, was substantially revised for a second edition in 1730, and finally published posthumously in a third edition in 1744. Nevertheless, by the time of his death in 1744, it had received very limited attention.

Geography played a part in this. Naples was the third-largest city in Europe, after London and Paris, and perhaps the most densely populated, but for most of Vico's life, it was not an independent capital. Until 1707 it was governed by a Spanish viceroy, and then (following the War of the Spanish Succession) by a viceroy of the Austrian Hapsburgs. Only in 1734, after it was reconquered by a branch of the Spanish royal family, did Naples become the capital of the newly created kingdom of Charles of Bourbon. Being a "kingdom governed as a province" had made the population restive. The unsuccessful Revolt of Masaniello in 1647 and the aristocratic Macchia conspiracy of 1701 were reminders of the underlying tensions.

Vico was a local historian, the author of the unpublished *History of the Conspiracy of the Neapolitan Princes of 1701* (1703) and the *Life of Antonio Carafa*, a seventeenth-century Neapolitan general who had commanded the imperial forces (1716), but his sympathies were with the Spanish cause, and his most significant official recognition came in 1735 when he was appointed the royal historiographer to Charles of Bourbon.

The primary focus of Vico's historical interests lay elsewhere, for his philosophical inquiries were pursued through the philological investigation of the distant past. The full title of his first work in this vein, *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians Unearthed from the Origins of the Latin Language*, accurately conveys the approach. This was also the methodology of the *New Science*, in which Vico sought to uncover the essential characteristics of knowledge and society through the examination of ancient history and mythology, within which etymologies revealed the primitive significance of particular words and thus the concepts and practices that had originally constituted human culture.

Vico saw his philosophical work as a refutation of skeptical philosophers of the seventeenth century, such as Descartes, Hobbes, and Spinoza. But in fact the originality of his writings was not fully appreciated until the nineteenth century when his emphasis on the imagination resonated with romantics such as Coleridge, his conception of the primitive mind informed the emerging discipline of sociology, and his acknowledgment of the collective nature of human achievements inspired Michelet and other nationalist historians.[2]

The Analogy of Painting

Analogies with painting are scattered throughout Vico's works. In one of his earliest, the *History of the Conspiracy of the Neapolitan Princes of 1701*, he announces that he will "reproduce

more accurately to the eyes of the reader the images that refer to the principal misdeeds of the conspiracy," just as painters "depict the principal figures, placed in the foreground of their paintings, with greater liveliness and precision," but treat more sketchily those of lesser consequence.[3] It is an uncontroversial ambition, but the reference is revealing nevertheless. Vico not only attributes to painting a degree of cultural authority, but also assumes a familiarity with a certain style of execution—one in which there is a marked difference between the degree of definition given to principal and secondary figures.[4]

The analogy between the verbal and the visual is developed more systematically later. It was a classical commonplace that poets and rhetoricians were like painters, and Vico was both. According to his *Autobiography*, he abandoned himself to poetry at an early age, and although his style changed with time, he never stopped writing occasional verses on deaths, aristocratic marriages, and public events. It was this interest in the practice of poetry that led him to the study of Horace's *Ars poetica*. He wrote a commentary, and once claimed that the whole of the *New Science* was a sort of perpetual commentary on the poem.[5] This was obviously an exaggeration, but Vico repeatedly rehearses Horace's trope of *ut pictura poesis*, noting that "the poet rightly compares poetry to painting, and in fact it is often said that painting is a mute poetry and poetry a speaking painting."[6] Vico also cited Simonides of Keos's famous saying about "mute poetry" in his class on the *Art of Rhetoric*, where it served as an example of the rhetorical device of antimetabole. And from his students' notes, it appears that Vico's deployment of the trope was not merely formulaic but an analogy for which he could furnish an example: Ariosto could be compared to Andrea del Sarto, "the most celebrated artist of his time and the prince of the Florentine school."[7]

In the first edition of the *New Science*, he returned to the theme again: the whole of poetic reason "reduces in its entirety to this: that a fable and an expression are one and the same thing, i.e., a metaphor common to poets and painters alike."[8] And why not, if, as he explained in a letter to Gherardo degli Angioli of December 26, 1725, the ideas of poets and painters "are the same, and do not differ from one another except as to words and colours."[9]

It was not just the words of poets that could stand in for colors but those of orators as well. The topos of *ut pictura rhetorica* is used by both classical and Renaissance authors, and Vico deploys it too.[10] At the start of his book on rhetoric, he explains that the best manuals for orators are those that have an abundance of illustrious examples, and that "not even the painters who wish to excel in art spend long hours in subtle discussions, but rather invest their many years in sketching and painting from the models of the best artists." He will therefore follow the same practice himself, teaching "with limited precepts, but . . . with the most extensive number of the very best examples."[11]

In this respect, as Vico pointed out in *Study Methods*, his students had little excuse for failing to learn, for they were fortunate enough to live in Italy, where in the arts "we possess a wealth of supremely accomplished productions, on which the admiration of posterity has conferred the prestige of archetypal exemplarity."[12] Yet all this artistic achievement was itself related to language. It was because "We Italians . . . are endowed with a language which constantly evokes images [that] we stand far above other nations . . . in the fields of painting, sculpture, architecture, and music."[13] However, the analogy with painting also suggests that exemplars are not in themselves sufficient: "any one of you can look at paintings daily, but may not see the innumerable features observed by

artists . . . why is this, why?" Vico himself provides the answer: someone finds himself in this position because he "has not yet developed the art of looking at pictures."[14]

Vico's repeated asides suggest that he thought history, poetry, and rhetoric all had visual parallels. This was a view promoted by sixteenth-century art theorists like Lodovico Dolce who, mindful that Petrarch had called Homer the "first painter of ancient memories," argued "that writers are painters; that painting is poetry; that painting is history; that any composition by a skilful man is painting."[15] Vico was disposed to think of himself as being like a painter as well. In the dedication to the first treatise in *Universal Right*, he directly compares himself to "the painter who hidden from sight listens to the judgments the experts are expressing about the paintings," and claims that he did the same when presenting this topic "in order to hear the reactions of the learned."[16] The reference is to the Greek painter Apelles who, according to Pliny, used to hide behind his paintings in order to eavesdrop on his critics, thinking them better judges than he was. Alberti had referred to the story, and advocated that contemporary painters follow Apelles's example and take heed of the viewers' reactions.[17] Here, Vico follows his advice.

Vico's Visual World

To imagine oneself a painter was to use and develop the imagination at the same time. Believing childhood and adolescence to be ages rich in fantasy, Vico encouraged the natural inclination of the young toward those arts, like painting, that use imagination and memory.[18] Such advice implies that Vico himself was susceptible to the visual arts as a child, and felt that he had learned something from them. Growing up in the heart of Naples at Via San Biagio dei Librai 31, the street of the booksellers, it could hardly have been otherwise. A hundred

yards or so from his house, farther along Spaccanapoli, stood an antique statue of the Nile (figure 1.2). Rediscovered in the fifteenth century and placed on a pedestal in this location in 1657, it was only then that a bearded head was added in keeping with the statue's identification as a river god. But the headless body was already known as the Corpo di Napoli, and the name stuck. When Vico wrote that "the great fragments of antiquity, hitherto useless to science because they lay begrimed, broken,



1.2.
Antique statue of the Nile, Naples (Photo: Luciano Pedicini).

and scattered, shed great light when cleaned, pieced together, and restored," he had at least one example near at hand.[19]

Another fragment, even closer to home, and visible in the courtyard of the Palazzo Carafa di Columbrano, was the bronze head of a horse by Donatello, given by Lorenzo de' Medici to Diomede Carafa in 1471. By the seventeenth century its origins had become obscure. It was thought to be all that remained of the great horse that Virgil (in his medieval role of magician) had caused to be made under an auspicious astrological alignment that rendered it capable of curing the sick if they so much as looked at it. An archbishop of Naples was said to have tried to put a stop to the superstition by melting down the body for the bells of the cathedral.[20]

This statue was invested with meanings far beyond its original significance, in part perhaps because of the relative scarcity of antique statuary in Naples at this time. Vico was not surrounded by antiquities as he would have been in Rome. He grew up surrounded by paintings, and throughout his life there were more and more of them as the churches in the nearby streets were transformed in ambitious programs of renovation and decoration. To the right of Vico's childhood home on Spaccanapoli, just before the statue of the Nile, is the church of San Nicola a Nilo. It was remodeled in 1705, but the altarpiece (now in the Museo Civico di Castelnuovo), completed ten years before Vico's birth, was Luca Giordano's *Saint Nicholas of Bari,* shown in glory with the nuns and pupils of the convent to one side, and below, the three small boys the saint resurrected after an innkeeper butchered them to feed to his guests. The subject stayed with Vico, for the inventory of his possessions made at his death lists one of the largest paintings as a "Saint Nicholas in Glory."

A little farther along the street, on the other side, is the church of San Michele Angelo, known as Sant'Angelo a Nilo,

which also housed the substantial library that Cardinal Francesco Maria Brancaccio left to the city on his death in 1675. In the church itself, there was a monument by Donatello and Michelozzo to Cardinal Rinaldo Brancaccio, the fifteenth-century founder of the church. Over the altar itself, Marco Pino's *Saint Michael* shows the archangel standing in triumph over the defeated devil. Beyond Sant'Angelo is the Piazza San Domenico Maggiore, dominated by the Dominican convent from which the university had developed, and to which the university returned from 1701 to 1736. The Gothic church was adorned with innumerable works of art, an *Annunciation* by Titian, Caravaggio's *Flagellation*, and on the ceiling of the sacristy, Francesco Solimena's *Triumph of the Dominican Order* of 1704–6.

Many of the paintings executed in late seventeenth-century Naples were the work of one man, Luca Giordano, not for nothing known as Luca *fa presto*. In 1678, when Vico was ten years old, Giordano had made a great impression with a group of paintings celebrating the return of Messina to Spain, which were publicly exhibited in Via Toledo, at the far end of Spaccanapoli, near the Monte dei Poveri Vergognosi. If Vico followed the crowds, he would have seen a mythological allegory showing Jupiter and the council of the gods deciding the preeminence among the powers of Europe and giving it to Spain.[21] This painting is now lost, but a closely related work, *Spain Receiving Messina* (figure 1.3), shows Spain crowned by Victory welcoming Messina (the naked woman with a castle on her head), accompanied by allegorical figures representing Benignity (with the branch of pine), Justice, and Prudence. The jumbled composition gives an indication of just how iconographically complex these paintings must have been.

Around this time, Giordano was also working on the frescoes in San Gregorio Armeno. The convent was immediately



1.3.
Luca Giordano, *Return of Messina to Spain*, Prado, Madrid
(© Museo Nacional del Prado–Madrid).

behind Vico's house, and though, in 1684, the whole family moved along the street to San Biagio dei Librai 23, it was only a few steps to the other side of the junction with Via San Gregorio Armeno. Vico was going back and forth to Vatolla between 1686 and 1695, and this house remained his base in Naples until, following his marriage in 1699, he moved with his wife to a property located on Vicolo dei Giganti (a narrow street parallel to San Paolo Maggiore and the Chiesa dei Girolamini) but entered from Vico dei Girolamini.[22]

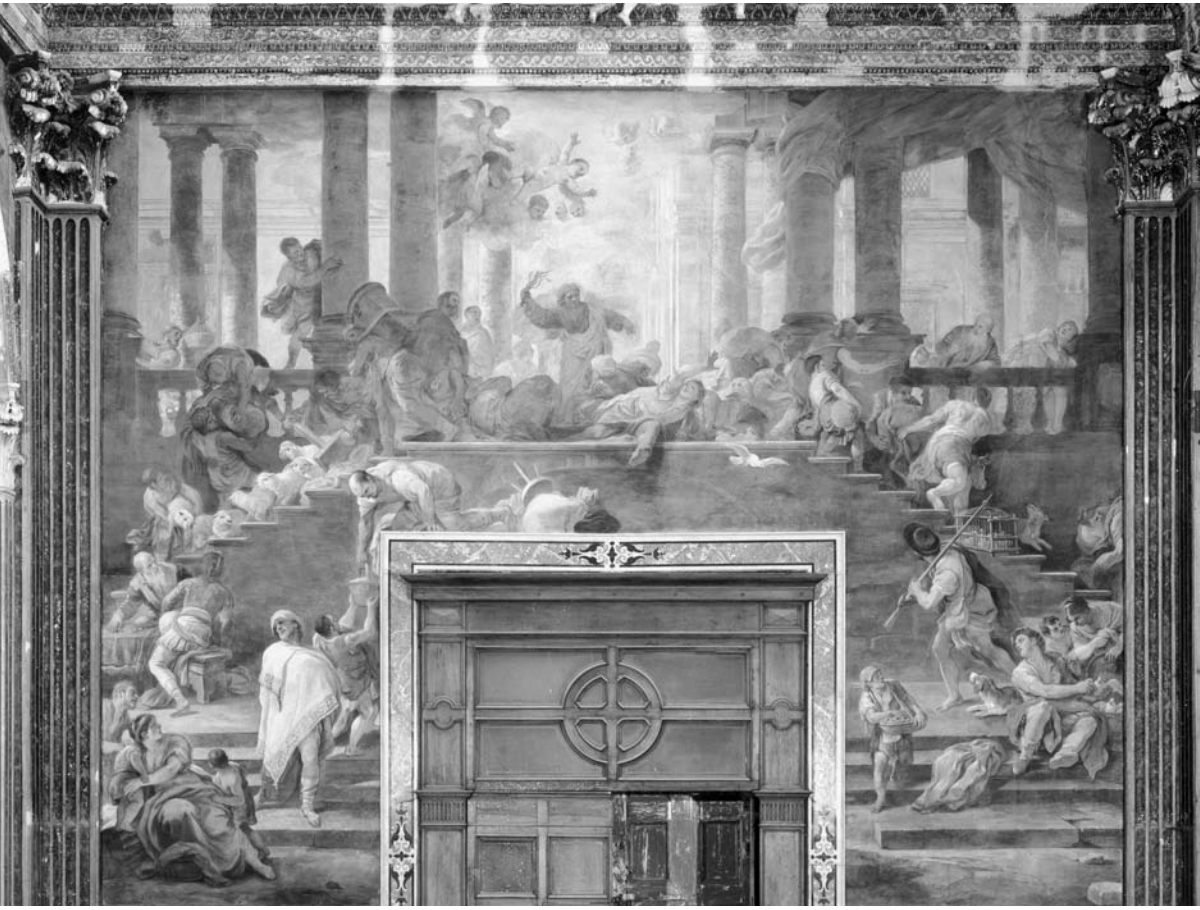
Five years later, he moved his growing family to a larger property on Largo dei Girolamini 112 (figure 1.4) at the foot of the steps outside the church (where today a plaque records his presence). It was while living in this house that he pub-



1.4.
Largo dei Girolamini, Naples, showing Vico's house to the right, and the Chiesa dei Girolamini with its recently reconstructed façade. Engraving by Jean Duplessi-Bertaux and Robert Daudet from Abbé de Saint-Non, *Voyage pittoresque ou description des royaumes de Naples et de Sicile*, Paris, 1781–86 (© The British Library Board).

lished *Study Methods*, *Ancient Wisdom*, and the life of Carafa. And although from 1718 he lived beyond the cathedral at various addresses in the area around Via San Giovanni a Carbonara, his association with the Girolamini continued. It was the church he most frequently attended, and it was here that he chose to be buried.[23]

Returning to his house a few feet away, Vico would have passed beneath Giordano's fresco of *Christ Driving the Money Changers from the Temple* on the back wall of the church



1.5.
Luca Giordano, *Christ Driving the Money Changers from the Temple*, Chiesa dei Girolamini, Naples (Photo: Luciano Pedicini).

(figure 1.5). Executed in 1684, the painting shows how much Giordano had learned from his time in Rome and Venice. Like Jupiter brandishing a thunderbolt, Christ stands whip in hand, bathed in supernatural light (figure 1.5a). All around him, merchants and street vendors hurriedly gather up their wares and tumble down the steps, some threatening to fall headlong into the viewer's space below. Leaving the church through the doors beneath the fresco and descending the steps into the *piazzetta*, the viewer inevitably becomes part of this chaotic exodus.

Giordano returned to the Girolamini in 1703 to paint the *Meeting of Saint Carlo Borromeo and Saint Filippo Neri* for one of the side chapels. If Vico had not met Giordano prior to his departure for Spain in 1692, he would have done so now, for both were friends of the lawyer and bibliophile Giuseppe Valletta. Giordano's *Meeting of Saint Carlo Borromeo and Saint Filippo Neri* was in part a response to Reni's unusual *Meeting of Christ and Saint John the Baptist*, housed in the sacristy of the Girolamini itself. This sacristy was in effect a small picture gallery, where works by numerous late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century painters were available "for the judgment of the curious." Pride of place was given to two works by Guido Reni, the *Meeting* and a *Flight into Egypt*, but Ribera and Pomarancio were also represented, alongside works by Caracciolo, Domenichino, the Bassani, and many others.[24]

The presence of Reni's paintings in the Girolamini was a reminder of the defining narrative of Neapolitan painting—the early seventeenth-century rivalry between Bolognese and



1.5a.
Detail of 1.5.

Neapolitan painters, which had been fought out just across the street in the chapel of San Gennaro in the cathedral where first Domenichino and then Lanfranco completed frescoes in the face of opposition from Ribera and others. Although the dispute was a century old, Vico lived surrounded by reminders of it. At the time of his death, he was resident near Santi Apostoli where, as at Sant'Andrea della Valle in Rome, the architect was Francesco Grimaldi, and there are frescoes by Lanfranco (the *Pool of Bethesda* on the *controfacciata*, 1644, though here the cupola is by his assistant Beinaschi). Inside the church, the Cappella Filomarino, designed by Borromini, has mosaics after the original paintings by Reni, and a relief by Duquesnoy. Vico never visited Rome, so this was probably the closest he came to the Roman baroque.

Among his Neapolitan contemporaries, Vico knew some of the painters well. He may have met Paolo de Matteis, who came from Cilento, during his time as a tutor to the Rocca family, who lived nearby. If not, he would certainly have come across him in Naples at the houses of Angela Cimmino or Valletta. There were also several painters who pursued both literary and artistic careers, including the still-life specialist Andrea Belvedere and Francesco Solimena, the leading painter of the day, and also an architect and a poet. Solimena's portrait of Vico, probably painted when the philosopher was in his early sixties, remained in the family until 1819, when it was destroyed in a fire. Some rather poor copies survive, showing a severe-looking man in professorial garb (see figure 1.1).[25]

Equally significant was Vico's friendship with Bernardo de Dominici, the painter better known as the Neapolitan Vasari, whom Vico would have known from the houses of Valletta, and of Nicola Gaetani, duke of Lauranzana (and husband of Aurora Sanseverino). De Dominici wrote a life of Luca Giordano, which first appeared in the Neopolitan edition

of G. P. Bellori's *Lives* (1728), and then went on to produce his own comprehensive *Vite dei pittori, scultori ed architetti napolitani*. Published in 1742–45, the work covers the entire history of the arts in Naples, culminating in the life of Solimena. Vico is thanked for his "wise advice" in the preface to the first volume, and then singled out again, along with two other "learned men," in its final sentence.[26]

Several of Vico's associates were also important collectors, notably Giuseppe Valletta. He was not just one of the leading intellectual figures of the day but a patron of artists (according to De Dominici he advised Giordano on iconography), and a collector of paintings as well as books. Vico valued Valletta's library in 1722 before it was bought by the Oratorians and moved to the Girolamini. Like other visitors to Valletta's house, he would have noted many works by Bernardo Cavallino, several by Caracciolo, Andrea Vaccaro, Salvator Rosa, and other Neapolitan painters, not to mention a portrait of Cesare Borgia, optimistically attributed to Titian.[27]

More magnificent still was the collection at Palazzo Filomarino della Rocca, located on Spaccanapoli, in what is now Via Benedetto Croce (the philosopher later lived in the palazzo himself). Giambattista Filomarino was Vico's private pupil from 1710, and it was for his marriage to Maria Vittoria Caracciolo di Sant'Eramo that Vico composed *Giunone in danza* in 1721, the only one of his poems to give expression to his philosophy of history.[28] The following year Vico was invited to the palace to expound his ideas, and he responded by dedicating the third book of *Universal Right* to his former student.[29] In the poem he described the palace as an "august dwelling, richly decorated with gold and purple,"[30] and in keeping with the splendor of the setting, the gallery contained 200 paintings and 300 small portraits, including Reni's four evangelists.[31]

Giambattista Filomarino could examine the contents of an entire gallery, but in Naples the ownership of paintings was not confined to the nobility. When Vico turned to his students and said "any one of you can look at paintings daily," this was not a rhetorical flourish. Vico was looking at paintings every day himself, at home. The inventory compiled at his death lists almost one hundred works.[32] They are predominantly still-life paintings: flowers—four large paintings of flowers and game, eleven smaller flower-paintings, plus nine little tondi of flowers—and fruit: four paintings and twelve small tondi, six in poplar frames and six in black pear. In addition, there are a dozen landscape paintings (two of them larger than the others) and two small marine subjects. As is usually the case, save in the most important collections, the inventory does not identify any of the artists, but the preponderance of still lifes reflects the prominence of the genre in Naples since the mid-seventeenth century.

The sense that this was a collection shaped by recent developments in Neapolitan painting is reinforced by the subjects of the history paintings, almost all of them religious. Only one work, a Madonna del Carmine with souls of purgatory, is identified as a *quadro vecchio* (which in this context probably means sixteenth century), and so it is fair to assume that the remainder are seventeenth or early eighteenth century. The two largest canvases are of *San Gennaro in Glory with Angels* and *Saint Nicholas in Glory with Angels*. These were quintessential Neapolitan saints, subjects for Solimena and Giordano, respectively (and the same pairing, framed in the same wood but somewhat smaller, is attributed to Aniello Russo in the Pignatelli inventory of 1723).[33] Also distinctive is the *Death of Saint Joseph with Virgin, Christ, and Angels*, the subject of an oratorio by Pergolesi and of paintings by many Neapolitan artists in the preceding century, which was

mounted in an octagonal frame (characteristic of works by Stanzione and Cavallino).

Most of the other paintings are of popular religious subjects: a Nativity, a small Ecce Homo, a Deposition of Christ, various pairs of saints (Jerome and Paul the Hermit, a small Saint Liborius and Saint Nicholas), at least five paintings of the Madonna in various iconographical contexts, two paintings of the Magdalen, and an assortment of other subjects. The only identifiable secular subject other than a portrait is a Cleopatra. But in addition to the portraits of Vico and his wife and son, there is a portrait of the king (presumably Charles of Bourbon) and of *Una donna che suona* (a subject that contemporary inventories also attribute to Cavallino).

This was a modest collection, and in a Neapolitan context, a conventional one. If Vico thought that human truth was in some sense like a painting, he did not necessarily mean that it is like these particular paintings more than others. But would he write that way if he thought that human truth was *unlike* the paintings surrounding him as he wrote? To put it another way, whatever human truth is like, it cannot be altogether unlike whatever it is that late seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century Neapolitan paintings are like.

Vico and Art Theory

Although he lived with a hundred paintings, Vico suggests that "the art of looking at pictures" does not develop automatically from routine experience. To see what an artist sees requires a trained eye and yet is not the exclusive preserve of artists. The art of looking can be cultivated by others as well. It is something his audience might learn, just as, by implication, Vico himself has done.

The primary sources of Vico's artistic education must have been his conversations with the artists and collectors in his

milieu. From them, he would have picked up the commonplaces of the studio. But there are also indications of Vico's independent reading in the history and theory of art. When he refers to the trials that Brunelleschi suffered at the hand of his fellow architects in trying to build the dome of Florence's cathedral, it suggests that he must have been reading Vasari.[34] And Vasari, too, would have been the most likely source for his high estimation of Andrea del Sarto (though not the comparison with Ariosto).

However, Vasari is not the source for a longer anecdote Vico relates later in *Study Methods*:

> While he was painting in Venice, Francisco Varga, ambassador of Charles V, asked him "why he used a style of painting so fat, that it seemed as if his paint brushes resembled brooms." Titian replied that "each individual must, in the art which he professes, seek praise for some excellence; and the reputation of an imitator is less than insignificant." His meaning was, that since Michelangelo had reached fame by the grandeur of his style, and Raphael by his suavity, he, Titian, was resolved to pursue an entirely different course.[35]

The story first appears in Antonio Pérez's *Segundas cartas* (1603) and in this context the emphasis is on the finish given to paintings by various artists, and the contrast between Titian's *borrones*, literally blots or smudges, and the *dulzura* found in the finish of other artists—Correggio and Parmigianino, as well as Raphael and Michelangelo.[36] It is a distinction echoed in the later debate between the Spanish art theorists Carducho, who championed Titian's loose late style, and Pacheco, who supported the highly finished naturalism of Caravaggio and his Spanish followers, including the Neapolitan painter Ribera.[37] It may have been in this context that the anecdote

first came to Vico's attention, but his Latin is far from an exact translation of the Spanish, and his gloss omits any reference to the other artists, explaining Titian's choice in relation only to Michelangelo and Raphael. This moves the focus away from the question of brushwork to Titian's attitude toward the differing styles of the two Renaissance masters.

The motivation for Vico's reinterpretation of the anecdote becomes apparent when he returns to the question of imitation in his commentary on Horace. Echoing Horace's injunction to eschew imitation, Vico suggests that it is better for an artist not to imitate the works of others but to follow nature, as did "the three painters who excelled in their particular types of painting: Michelangelo in the sublime, Raphael in the refined, and Titian in the temperate."[38] Here, Titian appears to be distinguished not by just his eccentric brushwork but rather by his style—a style located between the polarities represented by Michelangelo and Raphael.

The choice of epithets reveals the close connection between rhetoric and painting in Vico's mind, for these stylistic categories are derived from the three styles of rhetoric described in the ancient rhetorical treatise *Ad Herennium*, as *figura gravis*, *extenuata*, and *mediocris*.[39] Vico himself enumerated the three styles, describing them as: the noble or sublime (*magnifica seu sublimis*), which is solidly constructed and used in matters of great moment to arouse the emotions; the ordinary or understated (*humilis seu attenuata*), which is the habitual form used for ordinary conversation—spontaneous, elegant, and lightly articulated; and the tempered or moderate (*temperata seu mediocris*), which shares in both the others but is more ornamental than serious and used for pleasing matters or in celebration.[40] In the commentary on Horace, Vico is attributing the first of these styles to Michelangelo, the second to Raphael, and the third to Titian.

Vico seems to have been the first to differentiate the work of Michelangelo, Raphael, and Titian in precisely this way, but treating Michelangelo, Raphael, and Titian as the supreme trinity of *cinquecento* painting was an idea originally promoted in the sixteenth century by Lodovico Dolce and Pietro Aretino. Dolce contrasted Michelangelo's *terribilità* with Raphael's *maniera leggiadra e gentile* and criticized Michelangelo for forgetting that painting, like literature, required a "temperate measure."[41] Aretino also compared the three painters, distinguishing Titian from the other two by his brushwork:

> Divino in venusta fu Rafaello;
> E Michel Agnol più divin che umano
> Nel disegno stupendo; e Tiziano
> Il senso de le cose ha nel pennello.[42]
>
> [Raphael was divine in beauty / And Michelangelo
> more divine than human / Amazing in design; and
> Titian / Had the meaning of things in his brush.]

Vico echoes these ideas, but combines them with the categories of rhetoric. It was an appropriate move; by finding his originality in the size of his brushes, Titian aligns painting with rhetoric rather than poetry. The seventeenth-century French writer Bernard Lamy stated in *De l'art de parler*, that if "speech is the picture of our thoughts, the tongue is the brush that draws this picture."[43] But the analogy was already implicit in Titian's *impresa* (figure 1.6), which shows a she-bear licking her cubs into shape to illustrate the motto *natura potentior ars* (art is more powerful than nature), suggesting that the artist uses his brush like a tongue to transform nature into art.

It is clear that Vico's reworking of Pérez's story reflected earlier traditions about Titian's form of originality. Yet there was a particular reason why the anecdote was suited to the Neapolitan



1.6.
Titian's *impresa*, from Battista Pittoni, *Imprese di diversi prencipi, duchi, signori e d' altri personaggi*, Venice, 1578
(© The British Library Board).

context. Titian's remarks about the lowly reputation of imitators are used to illustrate Vico's argument that "the most outstanding masterpieces of the arts hinder rather than help students in the field." According to Vico, those who imitate "the highest masterpieces of art—let us say, the best paintings—are usually unable to create better ones." Proof of this can be found in the fact that the survival of *Farnese Hercules* and other masterpieces

of ancient sculpture "have prevented our sculpture from reaching its consummate fruition," whereas, in the absence of any of the masterpieces of ancient painting, "our painting has not failed to reach the peak of perfection."[44]

By the seventeenth century, recognition that modern sculpture lagged behind the achievements of both ancient sculpture and modern painting was widespread. Bellori himself acknowledged as much.[45] But to suggest that modern sculpture had been held back by its antique predecessors was another matter. Most people said the opposite.[46] Vico's sentiments sound unorthodox within the context of seventeenth-century art theory generally, but in the Neapolitan setting, they describe local virtues made of necessity. De Dominici makes a related point. Admitting that in Naples the perfect proportions of the best antique statues were, rather disgracefully, unknown, he nevertheless maintains that "if the Neapolitans were to undertake such study, that fire which has given birth to great and magnificent works would be cooled," citing the example of Luca Giordano, in whom "that poetic frenzy, arising from nature, but lost with the study of the antique, would be . . . stifled."[47]

Vico himself draws the logical, and from a Neapolitan perspective, distinctly partisan conclusion that

> it would seem almost advisable, in order to have great artists, to have the great masterpieces of art destroyed. But since this would constitute an atrocious act of barbarism, and since few of us can aspire to the crown of greatness, let us keep our masterpieces, and let them be used for the benefit of lesser minds.
>
> Those, instead, who are endowed with surpassing genius, should put the masterworks of their art out of their sight, and strive with the greatest to appropriate the secret of nature's grandest creation.[48]

The position adumbrated by Vico is therefore both more complex and more coherent than might first appear. Titian, who refused to imitate Michelangelo or Raphael, was seeking to pursue his own course, putting their work to one side, just as modern painters were forced to do (but modern sculptors could not) with reference to the example of antiquity. Neapolitan painters stood in the same relation to antique sculpture as Roman painters to antique painting, so Titian is choosing the course that Neapolitan painters follow of necessity.

Once again, there is a parallel with poetry. Vico suggests that if someone wants to excel in the art of poetry, they should deprive themselves of their own language and experience the world like a child, who uses only the senses and their imagination.[49] In order to develop, natural genius needs to be able to express itself unhindered.

Ideas

Vico does not deny the value of imitation altogether, however. In *Ancient Wisdom*, for example, he suggests two routes to artistic achievement:

> In the arts, which thrive on imitation—such as painting, sculpture, ceramics, and poetry—those men excel who can embellish an archetype taken from common nature with traits that are not common, or with new and marvellous features; or those who set off an archetype first expressed by another artist, with better features of their own, and so make it theirs. Some of these archetypes can be better feigned in effigy than others, because their models always surpass their copies; hence the Platonists construct a hierarchy of ideas; and by way of ideas of increasing perfection, they ascend by a flight of steps, so to speak, right to the supreme, best,

> and greatest God, who contains within himself the best ideas of everything.[50]

This is potentially a confusing passage because Vico here refers both to the models artists find in nature or the work of other artists and to the original ideas that exist only in the mind of God. But the meaning is clear: the former can be improved, whereas the latter can never be surpassed. Titian himself might stand as an example of the way this works. The motto of his *impresa*, "art is more powerful than nature," suggests that he too "embellishes an archetype taken from common nature with traits that are not common," physically shaping it, like the she-bear with her tongue or a potter with his hands, until it approaches the divine archetype.

But how does the painter gain access to the divine archetype in the first place? Vico returns to the question in the first edition of the *New Science*, using the analogy of poetry and painting:

> The idea of the poet gives things all the being that they lack. Thus it is as masters of the art of poetry say it should be, entirely imaginary [*fantastica*], like the work of a painter of ideas [*pittore d'idea*], and not representational [*icastica*] like that of a painter of portraits.[51]

Vico is here rehearsing seventeenth-century art theory. Bellori, the champion of Bolognese idealism, also contrasts "strictly representational [*icastici*] painters and makers of portraits who cherish no idea" with the "good painters and makers of perfect images, who employ the Idea,"[52] and argues, following Apollonius of Tyana, that "the imagination [*fantasia*] makes the painter wiser than imitation does, because the latter makes only the things that it sees, while the former makes also the things that it does not see."[53] As a modern ex-

ample, Bellori offers Titian's *Mary Magdalene*, of which Marino had written:

> Ma ceda la Natura e ceda il vero
> A quel che dotto Artefice ne finse
> Che qual l'havea ne l'alma e nel pensiero,
> Tal bella e viva ancor qui la dipinse.
>
> [But let Nature yield and reality yield / as well to what the learned Artist made of her / for just as he had her in his soul and thought, / so beautiful and alive, he also painted her here.][54]

This is, Bellori suggests, an indication that it is the idea of the artist that should be valued rather than nature itself.

The idealist theory of art was summarized by Bellori as follows:

> The supreme and eternal intellect, the author of nature, looking deeply within himself as he fashioned his marvelous works, established the first forms, called Ideas . . . the celestial bodies above the moon, not being subject to change, remained forever beautiful and ordered . . . [But] the opposite happens with the sublunar bodies, which are subject to change and to ugliness; and even though nature intends always to make its effects excellent, nevertheless, owing to the inequality of matter, forms are altered, and human beauty in particular is confounded, as we see in the innumerable deformities and disproportions that are in us. For this reason the noble painters and sculptors, imitating that first maker, also form in their minds an example of higher beauty, and by contemplating that, they emend nature without fault of color or of line.[55]



1.7.
Francesco Solimena, *Zeuxis and the Maidens of Croton*, Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, UK (© Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth. Reproduced by permission of Chatsworth Settlement Trustees).

Although this ideal cannot be perceived by the senses, it can be grasped by the mind and the imagination, and Bellori approvingly quotes Cicero's comparison of rhetoric and the visual arts: just as there is "an intellectual ideal by reference to which the artists represent those objects which themselves appear to the eye, so with our minds we conceive the ideal of perfect eloquence, but with our ears we catch only the copy."[56]

Does Vico also adhere to this theory? He is a theorist of the rhetorical rather than the visual arts, but he does appear to take something like it for granted whenever talking about painting. In his letter to Gherardo degli Angioli about the latter's poetry, Vico praises him for choosing ideas exactly as painters do, depicting "the men and women that they portray on canvas after certain ideal models of theirs in such a way that the portraits represent the originals in a better light, but you can [still] say it is this or that person."[57] Bellori described how this works by using Cicero's famous story of Zeuxis and the maidens of Croton, in which the painter Zeuxis uses the best parts of each to realize the ideal of Helen's beauty. The story was frequently illustrated, and Solimena's *Zeuxis and the Maidens* (figure 1.7), painted around 1690 as a pendant to his *Apelles, Alexander and Campaspe*, shows Zeuxis, guided by Fame, sitting brush in hand, appraising the merits of the women before him.

In his commentary on Horace, Vico also relates the story, bringing out its paradoxical implications in a way that Bellori does not:

> Zeuxis painted for the Crotons a Helen composed of twelve girls, using the single limbs with regard to which each overwhelmingly excelled the others . . . Compared with that body, these girls, though naturally beautiful, could not be considered truly beautiful. And from this one can deduce something truly astonishing, namely, that the poetic false is the metaphysical true, or as one now says "ideal" [*d'idea*], such that compared with it the physical true seems false.[58]

Applied to the scene depicted in Solimena's painting, this means that the woman on Zeuxis's oval canvas has less physical reality than the woman in front of him, whose toes he

could extend his foot to touch, but that as a portrait of Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world, she is more truthful than any of the models.

In the *New Science*, Vico supplies a more recent example, which clarifies the connection between truth and falsehood, history and poetry. Referring to popular myths about famous men, he argues that

> these fables are ideal truths suited to the merit of those of whom the vulgar tell them; and such falseness to fact as they contain consists simply in failure to give their subjects their due. So that, if we consider the matter well, poetic truth is metaphysical truth, and physical truth which is not in conformity with it should be considered false. Thence springs this important consideration in poetic theory: the true war chief, for example, is the Godfrey that Torquato Tasso imagines; and the chiefs who do not conform throughout to Godfrey are not true chiefs of war.[59]

In other words, real flesh and blood chiefs are just like the maidens of Croton who do not match up to the ideal beauty of Helen; individually, they must be considered false exemplars of the ideal, which in their case is represented by Tasso's Godfrey.

Such problems obviously posed the same sort of practical dilemmas for seventeenth-century artists as they had for Zeuxis, and Bellori twice cites the example of Guido Reni, who, when he sent the painting of Saint Michael (figure 1.8) to Rome for the church of the Capuchins, wrote:

> I should have liked to have had the brush of an angel, or forms of paradise, to fashion the archangel and to see him in heaven, but I was unable to ascend so high, and on earth I sought them in vain. So I looked at the form that I established for myself in my idea.[60]



1.8.
Guido Reni, *Saint Michael*, S. Maria della Concezione, Rome (Photo: AKG Images).

Here Reni makes a distinction between divine truth, which might be furnished by "the brush of an angel, or forms from paradise," and the truth that is available to him here on earth. Echoing Apollonius of Tyana's observation that Phidias and

Praxiteles had not gone up to heaven to draw the pagan gods from life, he admits that he too lacked a heavenly archetype. At the same time, he complains that the physical world provided no suitable models, and that his will, therefore, be an ideal truth that he establishes himself.

Is this then what Vico means by human truth being like a painting? Not divine truth, or a form from paradise, but nevertheless something better than mere physical truth? A painting made this way constructs a form of falsehood that is metaphysically true, in light of which physical truth itself appears false. Could all human truth be made this way?

Making Truth

In *On the Ancient Wisdom*, Vico explains that human truth is like painting as opposed to sculpture:

> Divine truth is a solid image like a statue; human truth is a monogram or a surface image like a painting. Just as divine truth is what God sets in order and creates in the act of knowing it, so human truth is what man puts together and makes in the act of knowing it.

How does this work? Vico contrasts God's mind, "which reads all the elements of things whether inner or outer" with the human mind, which "is limited and external to everything that is not itself" and so can only think about reality rather than understand it fully.[61] Both divine truth and human truth are made, but made in different ways:

> The true is precisely what is made [*Verum esse ipsum factum*]. And, therefore, the first truth is in God, because God is the first Maker . . . Thus, science is the knowledge of the genus or mode by which a thing is made; and by this very knowledge the mind makes the thing, because in

> knowing it puts together the elements of that thing. As we said, God makes a solid thing because he comprehends all the elements, man a plane image because he comprehends the outside elements only.[62]

The equation of the *verum* with the *factum* is easier to grasp in the case of divine than that of human truth. According to Vico, "to know [*scire*] is to put together the elements of things."[63] God knows the world because he put its various elements together when he created it. But what do humans make? Human experience and institutions. As Vico notes in the *Autobiography*, with the exception of certain eternal truths, we make everything else that we experience in and through the body—our images, memories, passions, and sensory perceptions included.[64] In this way we fabricate our own experience of the world—the equivalent of a two-dimensional representation of the three-dimensional world that God has created.

This account weaves together several strands of artist's talk—the Renaissance trope of the "divine artist," and the traditional idea that poets and painters were makers—reflected in the way they signed their works with the declaration *Fecit*.[65] Vico combines these motifs with another one—the *paragone* of sculpture and painting, in which sculpture is presented as having the superior degree of reality. Sculpture, unlike painting, is that which is and not that which appears to be; it is the thing itself, and so is "as superior to painting as the truth to a lie."[66] Putting the two together, Vico seems to be saying that divine truth is like a sculpture because it is true, while human truth is like a painting because it is false.

This sounds self-contradictory, but the first inaugural oration of 1699 helps to put the paradox in context. Here Vico offers an extended comparison of God "the master artist of nature" and "the mind, we may say, the god of the arts."[67]

Here, the emphasis is on *fantasia* as the faculty through which the human mind can take apart and put together the elements of things:

> The power that fashions the images of things which is called phantasy [*fantasia*], at the same time that it originates and produces new forms, reveals and confirms its divine origin. It was this that imagined the gods of all major and minor nations; it was this that the heroes imagined; it is this that now differentiates the forms of things, sometimes separating them, sometimes mixing them together . . . and [uniting] things that are separated.[68]

Later, he offers a more nuanced account, which divides the imaginative process into three different aspects: "memory when it remembers things, imagination [*fantasia*] when it alters or imitates them, and invention [*ingegno*] when it gives them a new turn, or puts them into a proper arrangement or relationship."[69] Memory is the foundation, because it provides the material on which *fantasia* can go to work, but mixing is specifically the function of *ingegno*, which, as Vico argues in *Ancient Wisdom*, is "the faculty that connects disparate and diverse things."[70] On this view, *fantasia* is the eye of *ingegno*, with which "a man can put together things that appear completely unrelated."[71]

To illustrate the point, Vico offers the traditional example of *fantasia* in painting where memory is necessary to create hybrids such as "hippogryphs and centaurs [that] are true to nature but falsely mixed."[72] In the commentary on Horace he offers further examples of what he has in mind, identifying such imaginative compositions with the style of the painted grotesque, *di rabesco*.[73] Horace had made fun of such grotesqueries on the basis of the analogy with painting, in which, he claimed, they simply looked laughable. Vico does not deny

this, but he explains why such poetic monstrosities might be necessary by pointing to the first *New Science*, where he had argued that in early times, when men were "unable to abstract properties from bodies, should they need to unite different kinds of properties belonging to bodies of different kinds, they would unite the two bodies in a single idea."[74] In any case, as Vico goes on to say, putting things together out of diverse elements does not necessarily undermine the unity of the whole—a sculptor can cast limbs separately in bronze and then solder them together; Zeuxis painted Helen using the body parts of twelve different girls.[75]

This is the original setting for Vico's claim that the poetic false is the metaphysical true because the physical true, with reference to which the poetic/pictorial idea is false, is itself false compared to the metaphysical true.[76] What is striking in this context is that Vico offers it as a comment on Horace's critique of grotesques. According to Francesco de Hollanda, Michelangelo had responded to Horace in much the same way, saying that when "a great painter makes a work that seems false and deceitful, this falseness is truth; and greater truth in that place would be a lie."[77] Vico goes further, invoking the example of Zeuxis to suggest that there is no essential difference between the process involved in putting together mythical monsters and putting together ideal forms from multiple sources. Both are the product of *fantasia*, and though they may not always be equally true, relative to physical truth they are equally false.

The claim that human truth is like a painting therefore seems to have two aspects, both of them paradoxical: human truth is like a painting because, compared with divine truth, painting is necessarily false; human truth is made in such a way that, like an ideal painting, it is simultaneously physically false and metaphysically true.

The First Fable

Vico's analogy between the role of *fantasia* in making paintings and its role in making myths was not entirely novel. The analogy between the two was easy to see, and Fontenelle also pointed to it in the *Origin of Fables*, where he argues that the poetry and painting of the Greeks "only gave back to the imagination its own productions" since it was from the imagination that the fables were created in the first place.[78] However, in his great philosophy of history, the *New Science*, Vico develops the idea far more systematically.

Here, he emphasizes that whereas the Hebrews had the benefit of "divine truths which [they] had been taught by the true God" and so worshipped a God who was not a "fantasy of their imagination" (*fantasia con immagini*), the Gentiles, lacking the benefit of divine revelation, worshipped gods that were false.[79] There was nothing controversial about the claim that Gentiles worshipped their own fantasies—that is what Christians had always claimed—but Vico treats it as a positive achievement of the same kind as the creation of an ideal painting. Because *fantasia* is strongest in childhood,[80] it was this capacity that enabled "the first men, the children, as it were, of the human race . . . to create poetic characters; that is, imaginative class concepts or universals, to which, as to certain models or ideal portraits, to reduce all the particular species which resembled them."[81]

In the first *New Science*, Vico explains what he means by a poetic character: "Just as the letter 'a' . . . is a grammatical character invented to provide uniformity for the infinite number of different vocal sounds . . . [and] the triangle a geometrical character . . . so the poetic characters are found to have been the elements of the language in which the first gentile nations spoke."[82] These poetic characters were "the essence of the fables,"[83] but they were

not necessarily verbal in origin, as Vico explains using his characteristic etymological method:

> "Logic" comes from *logos*, whose fit and proper meaning was *fabula*, fable, carried over into Italian as *favella*, speech. In Greek the fable was also called *mythos*, myth, whence comes the Latin, mute. For speech was born in mute times as mental [or sign] language . . . Thus the first language in the first mute times of the nations must have begun with signs, whether gestures or physical objects which had natural relations to the ideas [to be expressed].[84]

This account effectively aligns the first language with the practice of painting, frequently referred to in the seventeenth century as a *muta eloquentia* or *muta poesis*. Vico himself makes the analogy explicit in the first *New Science*: "A fable and an expression are one and the same thing, i.e., a metaphor common to poets and painters alike, so that a mute who lacks the expression can depict it."[85]

A clearer picture of what Vico has in mind emerges from his account of the origin of the first fable. It was born at the time when men were giants. They lived "in bestial solitude . . . and, like so many children, expressed their passions by shouting, grunting, murmuring." For hundreds of years after the flood, there had been no lightning, but then lightning struck once more: "ignorant of the causes of thunderbolts . . . [they] imagined that the sky was a vast animate body which, by shouting, grunting, and murmuring, spoke and wanted to communicate with them."[86] This grunting fantasy was *muta poesis* in action. In this way, "the first theological poets created the first divine fable, the greatest they ever created: that of Jove, king and father of men and gods, in the act of hurling the lightning bolt."[87] It did not happen



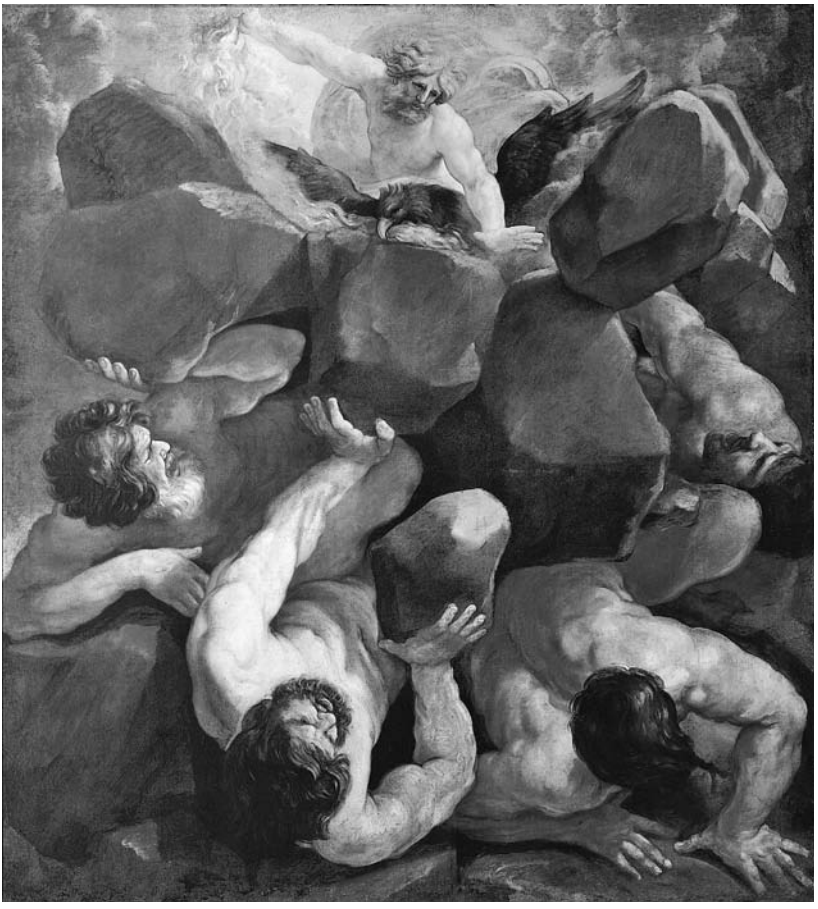
1.9.
Luca Giordano, *Battle of Gods and Giants*
(Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto).

just once, but many times and in many cultures,[88] so that "through the thick clouds of those first tempests, intermittently lit by those flashes [of lightning], they made out this great truth: that divine providence watches over the welfare of all mankind."[89]

Luca Giordano's *Battle of Gods and Giants* (figure 1.9), probably painted in Naples shortly before the artist's departure for Spain in 1692, illustrates this primeval scene as it was traditionally conceived. In the top right corner is Jupiter with his thunderbolt, while Minerva and Hercules (with the club) take the fight to the giants below. The giants themselves are ungainly brutes wielding tree trunks and boulders, falling back into the crevices between the rocks they themselves have piled up in the effort to take heaven by storm.

Vico's interpretation is rather different. He attributed this version of the story to an interpolation in Homer (for whom the gods were no higher than Olympus),[90] and argued that "the first impious giants not only did not fight the gods but were not even aware of them until Jove hurled his bolts."[91] For Vico, what was later described as a war against heaven was merely ignorance of it. Just as "atheists become giants in spirit, ready to say with Horace: *Caelum ipsum petimus stultitia*, 'heaven itself we assail in our folly,' so the giants, who had, as it were, 'warred against heaven in their atheism,' were defeated by their own conception of Jove 'whom they feared as the wielder of the thunderbolt.' "[92] Jupiter wields his thunderbolt against the giants only because they have furnished him with one: "The idea of course not shaped by reasoning . . . but by the senses, which, however false in the matter, were true enough in their form."[93]

The simplified scene depicted in Reni's *Fall of the Giants* (figure 1.10) is perhaps closer to the way Vico conceives the event, save that in his account Jupiter is simply the creation of the giants' own imaginings. Yet the effect is just the same. In those days, men were "stupid, insensate, and horrible beasts,"[94] wandering the earth and mating indiscriminately. But once "deceived into fearing the false divinity of Jove,"[95] they began to feel shame at their own untamed lusts, and retreated into caves in the rocks



1.10.
Guido Reni, *Fall of the Giants*, Museo Civico, Pesaro
(Photo: AKG Images).

to fulfill their desires in private. In this way, Vico suggests, the idea of Jove with the thunderbolt, "by making them god-fearing, was the source of their poetic morality,"[96] the foundation of marriage, a settled way of life, and ultimately of all the institutions of human civilization itself.[97]

By creating Jove "as a divine character or imaginative universal,"[98] the "theological poets," as Vico calls the giants, were working in the same way as Bellori's painter of fantasy:

> Thus the first fable, the first principle of the divine poetry of the gentiles, i.e., of the theological poets, was born. And it was born as the supreme fable must be, wholly ideal, in that the idea of the poet gives things all the being that they lack. Thus it is as masters of the art of poetry say it should be, entirely imaginary, like the work of a painter of ideas, and not representational like that of a painter of portraits. Hence, through this resemblance to God, the creator, the poets were called divine.[99]

The poetic characters of the theological poets "were certain imaginative genera [*generi fantastici*] . . . to which they reduced all the species or all the particulars appertaining to each genus."[100] In this way, one fictive individual can realize the qualities of an entire class of people more completely than any of the real ones. Rather as the Croton maidens were subsumed within Zeuxis's image of Helen, Vico suggests that the noble Argive maidens kidnapped by Paris were "represented by the character of Helen."[101]

From this perspective, it becomes clear that there is a parallel between Reni's Saint Michael, fashioned from Reni's own idea because he lacked "forms from paradise," and the image of Jupiter created by the giants who formed their own idea of divinity, because, unlike the Hebrews, they lacked all knowledge of the true God. Deprived of divine truth, humans have to make truth out of the falsehoods they invent for themselves. Such truth is necessarily false, insofar as it is not divine, for "all ideas derived from created things are, in a way, false in the face of the idea of the Supreme Deity."[102] But there is some sense in which it is true nevertheless.

The Verisimilar

Vico acknowledges that fables are lies.[103] However, he also argues that although the word *mythos* "survived with the meaning of the word fable which everyone has hitherto taken to mean a false narration," its original meaning was a "true narration."[104] Indeed, he claims not to "share the opinion that poets take special delight in falsehoods. I would even dare to affirm that poets are no less eager in the pursuit of truth than philosophers,"[105] not least because "poetic falsehoods are the same as the general truths of the philosophers, with the sole difference that the latter are abstract and the former clothed in images."[106]

The concept on which this paradox hinges is the notion of the verisimilar. Aristotle had argued that the difference between a historian and a poet is not that one writes verse and the other prose. On the contrary,

> the real difference is this, that one tells what happened and the other what might happen. For this reason poetry is something more scientific and serious than history, because poetry tends to give general truths while history gives particular facts. By "general truth" I mean the sort of thing that a certain type of man will do or say either probably or necessarily.[107]

Tasso identified Aristotle's "general truth" (*universale*) with "the verisimilar," arguing that "the poet considers the verisimilar only as it is universal,"[108] reducing "the true details [*il vero ed i particolari*] of the story to the verisimilar and universal, which is proper to his art."[109]

In his commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics*, Castelvetro had extended the argument to painting, arguing that painting should be like history and concern itself with particular facts,

but that poetry should not.[110] It is to this claim that Bellori is responding when he complains that Castelvetro maintains "that the virtue of painting is . . . in making it similar to nature, whether beautiful or deformed, as though excess of beauty takes away the likeness."[111] Bellori's view is that painting should be like poetry rather than history. The idea therefore "constitutes the perfection of natural beauty and unites the truth with the verisimilitude [*il vero al verisimile*] of things that appear before the eye . . . so that it not only rivals but becomes superior to nature."[112] Vico's account of the artist ascending the Platonic hierarchy of ideas by embellishing nature is clearly in keeping with Bellori's position rather than Castelvetro's. Similarly, he argues that poets create "imaginary figments which, in a way, are more real than physical reality itself" because they "keep their eyes focused on an ideal truth, which is a universal idea."[113]

So where does this leave the question of truth and falsehood? Vico's imaginative universals are, as he defines it elsewhere, "*verisimile*, an ideal truth that conforms to the common sense of all men."[114] As such, they (*verismilia*) "stand, so to speak, midway between truth and falsity."[115] However, they have their own form of certainty, for common sense is "a judgment without reflection, shared by an entire class, an entire people, an entire nation, or the entire human race,"[116] and "uniform ideas originating among entire peoples unknown to each other must have a common ground of truth."[117]

Vico's philological work in the *New Science* is intended to "recover these grounds of truth,"[118] and to show how, thanks to divine providence, "truth has been sifted from falsehood in everything that has been preserved for us through long centuries."[119] Within this project, the analogy of painting helps to differentiate two aspects of Vico's account of human truth that are easily conflated. On the one hand, being like a painting

rather than a sculpture, human truth is never going be true in the way that divine truth is true, because it is a representation and not the thing itself. On the other hand, human truth, if it is approximate to the divine, has to be universal rather than particular, physically false and verisimilar, like an ideal painting, rather than physically true and metaphysically false.

TWO
Icastic Painting

Atomism in Painting

Vico's alignment of epistemology with the theory of painting and the narrative of prehistory was not purely speculative. It addressed recent intellectual and artistic controversies, and was designed to show that "God shines even in the darkness of errors."[1] In the seventeenth century, Naples had been full of errors both artistic and philosophical.

According to Bellori, icastic painters and portraitists followed no idea and were subject to the ugliness of the face and body. The prime culprit in this regard was Caravaggio, who "copied bodies purely as they appear to the eye, without selection."[2] His work may have served a useful purpose in drawing painters back to nature after the fantastic creations of late mannerism, but he immediately went from one extreme to the other. And his followers "in their effort to distance themselves from the *maniera* by following nature too closely . . . strayed from art altogether, and remained in error and darkness."[3] Is

it possible that the philosophical errors to which Vico refers were the same errors as those of Caravaggio and his followers?

Vico was in a good position to judge. Although Caravaggio had died in 1610, his legacy lingered in Naples longer than elsewhere in Italy. By disparaging antique sculpture and making nature the sole object of his study,[4] Caravaggio had offered Neapolitan painters an example that was easy for them to follow. The impulse toward naturalism had been most fully realized in still-life paintings, and Vico lived in a house with forty of them. When he went out, he had the opportunity to see paintings by Caravaggio himself. There were five of his paintings in churches within half a mile of the houses in which Vico lived for most of his life.

A short distance from Largo dei Girolamini, continuing along Via dei Tribunali, but on the other side of Via del Duomo, is the church of the Pio Monte della Misericordia, for which Caravaggio had painted the *Seven Acts of Mercy* in 1607. In the other direction, in San Domenico Maggiore, was Caravaggio's *Flagellation,* completed in the same year (figure 2.1). The *Flagellation* was in many respects the most classical of Caravaggio's Neapolitan paintings, with an obvious reference to the antique (the statue known as the Arrotino) in the crouching figure in the foreground. But it was still shocking. According to De Dominici, the work attracted a lot of attention, but not entirely for the right reasons, for the figure of Christ was taken from low life rather than the gracious model "required to represent the figure of a god made man for us."[5]

Most controversial of all in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the *Resurrection* in the Fenaroli Chapel of Sant'Anna dei Lombardi. The painting is now lost, for the church in question (which also contained two other paintings by Caravaggio—a *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata* and a



2.1.
Caravaggio, *Flagellation of Christ*, Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples (Photo: Luciano Pedicini).

Saint John the Baptist) is not that of the same name today, but one nearby, which was destroyed by an earthquake in 1805. The composition scandalized nearly everyone who saw it. In Luigi Scaramuccia's dialogue of 1674 he describes how

> afterward they went again to the above-mentioned church of Sant'Anna to admire the other work more carefully, seeing not the usual Christ who appears quite agile and triumphant in the air. Rather, with his bold manner of painting, he showed him with one foot inside and the other outside the tomb on the ground, and because of such extravagance they remained apprehensive—so much so that Girupeno asked Genio, his teacher, if he could imagine why Caravaggio had produced those images.[6]

The apprehension they felt was soon attributed to Christ himself. De Dominici described "the resurrection of the Lord, who leaves the sepulchre as if frightened," while the French traveler Charles Cochin saw a thin man "not in the air but passing his guards on foot . . . like a convict escaping from his jailers." Such a depiction of the central event of the Christian faith, was, as De Dominici said, a "base idea indecent to represent."[7]

The controversy surrounding the Sant'Anna dei Lombardi *Resurrection* highlights the wider ideological implications of the debate about Caravaggio's style. According to Bellori, the Caravaggisti were like the classical atomists:

> Those who glory in the name of naturalists do not propose any Idea whatever for themselves in their minds; they copy the defects of bodies and inure themselves to ugliness and faults, they too swear by the model as their teacher; and when it is taken out of their sight, all their art goes with it . . . [they] are like Leucippus and Democritus, who compose bodies randomly of vainest atoms.[8]

It was a damaging accusation to make, for in the early modern period to call someone an atomist was close to an accusation of atheism. So it is no surprise to find that other seventeenth-century art historians added to Caravaggio's notoriety in this regard. Passeri claimed that he was said to be "accursed and excommunicate," and Malvasia that he "had no knowledge of supernatural things." According to Susinno, Caravaggio "went about questioning our holy religion, for which he was accused of being an unbeliever."[9]

The atheistic implications of atomism heightened the significance of the analogy between atomism and painting. The practice of painting therefore became the ground on which the debate could be fought. Bellori sought to discredit Caravaggism through the comparison to atomism; others sought to discredit atomism through the analogy with painting. In *La ricreatione del savio*, rather than arguing that bad painting is like heretical philosophy, the Jesuit Daniello Bartoli suggested that atomism would be the recipe for a bad painting. You can get some idea of what a world composed of the vainest atoms at random would be like by thinking of a painting composed under the same conditions. Nobody would believe that someone blind from birth, ignorant of the art of drawing, and with no ideas in their head that weren't muddled and grotesque, would, if armed with brushes and paints, be able to paint a large canvas of the battle of Alexander and Darius in such a way that it united the draftsmanship of Michelangelo, the brushwork of Correggio, the color of Titian, the composition of Raphael, and the grace of Parmigianino. On the contrary, the result would be utter chaos (especially if executed with the pointillist technique implied by atomism), just as it would in the world described by Democritus.[10]

Caravaggesque naturalism wasn't pointillist, although at its most extreme it becomes a series of bright highlights in a

dark void. But its effect on painting was thought to be similar. Bellori said that it was like a pernicious poison, and his friend Poussin was blunter: Caravaggio came to destroy painting.[11] The Spanish art theorist Vicente Carducho even referred to him as the Antichrist of painting, performing false miracles and strange deeds:

> Did anyone ever paint, and with so much success, as this monster of genius and talent, almost without rules, without theory, without learning and meditation, solely by the power of this genius and the model in front of him which he simply copied so admirably? I heard a zealot of our profession say that the appearance of this man means a foreboding of ruin and an end of painting, and how at the close of this visible world the Antichrist, pretending to be the real Christ with false and strange miracles and monstrous deeds would carry with him to damnation a very large number of people moved by his works which seemed so admirable (although they were in themselves deceptive, false, and without truth or permanence). Thus this Anti-Michelangelo with his showy and external copying of nature, his admirable technique and liveliness has been able to persuade such a large number of all kinds of people that his is good painting and that his theory and practice are right, that they have turned their backs on the true manner of perpetuating themselves and on true knowledge in this matter.[12]

Atomism in Naples

In Naples in 1688, a young man named Francesco Paolo Manuzzi denounced some of his acquaintances who, he said, claimed that Christ was not God, and that men were made of atoms and had lived in the world before Adam. The chief tar-

gets of his accusations were two lawyers, Basilio Giannelli and Giacinto de Cristofaro, and later Nicola Galizia. The sources of their ideas were said to be the ancient atomists, Democritus, Epicurus, and Lucretius, and from the seventeenth century, Descartes and Gassendi. By 1693, they were imprisoned by the Inquisition under suspicion of atheism—Cristofaro detained in San Domenico Maggiore, the convent that had itself nurtured the infamous heretics Giordano Bruno and Tommaso Campanella a century earlier.[13]

The case eventually became embroiled in legal disputes about the jurisdiction of the Inquisition and the local ecclesiastical courts, with Valletta leading the legal protest against imprisonment. In the end all were released. But at the time, the investigation must have come uncomfortably close to Vico. If, as he implies, he was allowed to attend meetings of the Accademia degli Investiganti in the 1680s, he would have met the accused men there. Some of them, like Vico, went on to become members of the Accademia Medina Coeli (founded in 1698), and Vico clearly remained close to them, for he thanks both Galizia and Cristofaro for their encouragement in the preface to *Ancient Wisdom* in 1710.[14]

During the years in question, Vico was spending much of his time at Vatolla, safely out of the way, but as he later acknowledged in his autobiography (without alluding to the arrests) this was the period in which he, too, encountered atomism.

> At the time he left Naples the philosophy of Epicurus had begun to be cultivated in Pierre Gassendi's version; and two years later news that the young men had become its devotees made him wish to study it in Lucretius. By reading Lucretius he learned that Epicurus, because he denied any generic difference of substance between mind

> and body and so for want of a sound metaphysic remained of limited mind, had to take as the starting point of his philosophy matter already formed and divided into multiform ultimate parts composed of other parts which he imagined to be inseparable because there was no void between them.[15]

According to this later account, Vico immediately saw that atomism was "a philosophy to satisfy the circumscribed minds of children and the weak ones of silly old women." His reading therefore served "only to confirm him still further in the doctrines of Plato . . . [that] there are certain eternal truths that we cannot mistake or deny."[16]

In being saved from atomism by Plato's ideas, Vico was following in the steps of a previous generation of Neapolitan painters who, lost in the darkness of Caravaggesque naturalism, had been saved from pictorial atomism by the example of the Bolognese. Bellori had described how painting in Italy had languished "until Annibale Carracci came to enlighten their minds and restore beauty to imitation."[17] And in much the same way, De Dominici describes how seventeenth-century Neapolitan painting was saved from the detrimental influence of Caravaggio by the "ray of light of the *maniera guidesca*."[18]

Guido Reni came to Naples twice: briefly in 1612, and then in 1621–22 to decorate the Cappella di San Gennaro in the Cathedral. But the hostility of the local artists drove him away after only a few months. The chapel was eventually completed by others, and the paintings that had been commissioned for the Girolamini—the *Meeting of Christ with Saint John the Baptist*, *Flight into Egypt*, and *Saint Francis in Ecstasy*—were delivered after his return to Bologna. (*The Adoration of the Shepherds* for the Certosa di San Martino only arrived much later, after Reni's death.) Reni nevertheless functions as the

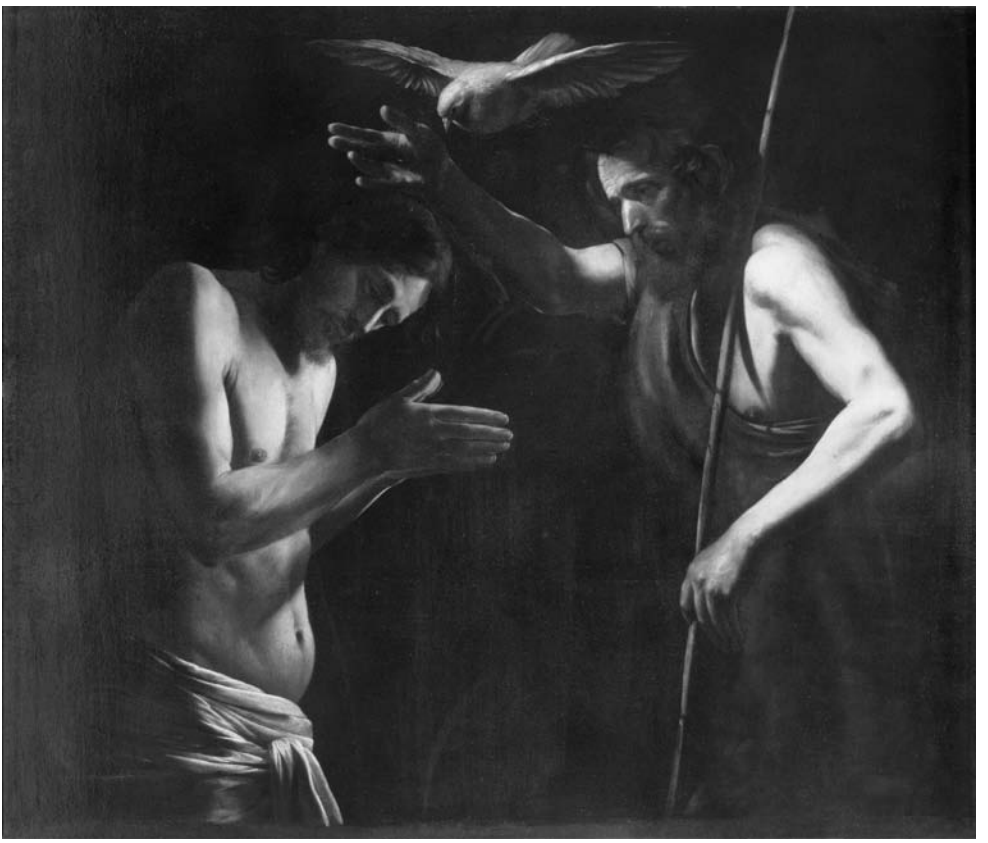
pivotal figure in De Dominici's narrative. Caravaggism had made a great impression, but then Reni arrived and "exposed to the world his beautiful, noble, elegant style, and with the light of this . . . dispelled that gloomy style of Caravaggio."[19]

This light was not merely metaphorical. A comparison of Reni's *Meeting* (figure 2.2) with the *Baptism of Christ* (figure 2.3), painted by one of Caravaggio's closest followers, G. B. Caracciolo (Il Battistello), illustrates the point. Both paintings were in the Girolamini, where Vico would have had many opportunities to compare them. One shows the meeting of Christ and John the Baptist as young men, while in the other both are adults. In Caracciolo's painting, both figures are almost completely lost in the gloom, which is illuminated directly from above, but in such a way that the outstretched wings of the dove cast a dark shadow over even the central gesture of the painting, leaving an abyss of darkness between the figures. In contrast, in Reni's *Meeting*, where Christ accepts John's homage and the gestures are reversed, the light picks up the gentle curve of Christ's outstretched right arm as he reaches out toward John, uniting both figures in a single space and narrative.[20] Reni's picture shows an event without scriptural warrant or much iconographical precedent, while Caracciolo's is iconographically traditional, and yet Reni's painting makes sense in a way that Caracciolo's does not, for Caracciolo's technique seems to threaten the very meaning the painting was intended to convey.

Looking at these two paintings, it is possible to get a sense of just why Caravaggism seemed so destructive, and why Reni's intervention in Neapolitan painting appeared to offer salvation. De Dominici provides a series of conversion narratives in which painters reject one style in favor of the other, and in the case of Andrea Vaccaro (of the same family as Vico's friend Domenico Antonio Vaccaro) he gives a particularly full



2.2.
Guido Reni, *Meeting of Christ and Saint John the Baptist*, Quadreria dei Girolamini, Naples (Photo: Luciano Pedicini).



2.3.
G. B. Caracciolo, *Baptism of Christ*, Quadreria dei Girolamini, Naples (Photo: Luciano Pedicini).

account.[21] Caravaggio was at the height of his fame in Naples and hearing him praised so much, Andrea resolved "to embrace that erroneous opinion himself . . . [and] let himself be dazzled by the common error, and by the bold new style of Caravaggio."[22] But Massimo Stanzione "took him away from those errors and placed him on the path of light."[23] He did this by encouraging him to look at the paintings by Reni in the

Conca, Filomarino della Rocca, Della Torre, and Pignatelli collections. Duly impressed by Reni's noble ideas, tender hues, and upturned eyes, "it was then that his mind cleared, and he gave up following Caravaggio's dreadful manner, and turned to follow Reni's noble and elegant style."[24] In the company of Stanzione, Vaccaro could then be seen not just looking at but sketching the works of Domenichino, Reni, and Lanfranco, "saying that the works of these great masters must be constantly before his eyes to feed his *fantasia* and enable it to conceive beautiful ideas."[25]

Stories like this demonstrate how the challenge posed by atomism might be met. Under the influence of Caravaggio, naturalism had become fashionable, and yet painting had not been destroyed. On the contrary, according to Vico, it had reached a pinnacle of perfection. Thanks to the example of the Bolognese and their use of ideas, painting in Naples had recovered from its encounter with artistic atomism and resisted the deceptions of its Antichrist. When Vico sought to do the same with reference to philosophical skepticism, he had models for what he wanted to do all around him. If the painters had overcome atomism, surely the philosophers could do so as well.

Autopsia

As Vico attests, there was a revival of interest in Epicurus in late seventeenth-century Naples (Valletta himself wrote a work devoted to his rehabilitation) and atomism was not the only front in this "war against metaphysics." According to Vico, the other problem was that

> Epicurus admitted *autopsian,* the evidence of the senses, and pretentiously stated the *kritērion* of truth by defining it in this way: things are what they seem to be to each

> person. Therefore, he denied all eternal truths, in which all human beings—although most different in their perceptions, their nature, their customs, their interests, and often also amongst themselves unfavourable and greatly hostile—most consistently agree.

Vico, on the other hand, maintained that "autopsy, or seeing with one's own eyes" is "an uncertain rule of what is true."[26] The basis for the claim is Vico's distinction between the certain and the true, according to which the certain "rests on authority, the authority of our own senses, that is called autopsy (personal experience) or that of the sayings of others, that is specifically called authority" while the true "subsists in our reason." This means that true/false and certain/dubious categories do not necessarily overlap. Indeed, they are often contraries for "many true things are dubious" and "many false things are accepted as certain," including, potentially, the evidence of the senses.[27]

This argument is clearly a response to the Epicurean idea, repeated by Gassendi, that "all sensations are true."[28] However, *autopsia* was not a word particularly associated with Epicurus but rather with Galen, from whom it passed into the vocabulary of seventeenth-century medicine. It appears most frequently, and is used with the sharpest polemical intent, in the writings of William Harvey, who sought to learn "by actual inspection [*per autopsiam*] and not by other people's books." Instead of relying on established authorities, he resolved to "find the truth by constant observation [*multaque autopsia veritatem discernere*]",[29] for nothing can provide more certainty than "the practice of viewing Nature herself with your own eyes [*ipsamque autopsiam amplectendo*]."[30]

Used in this sense, the word *autopsia* first appears in Italian in Bartoli's scientific tract of 1681, *Della coagulazione*.[31]

Vico, too, was much concerned with blood. He had his own scientific theories about the effects of hot and cold air on the circulation,[32] and he probably knew Harvey's work firsthand, for there were Latin editions of Harvey's key texts in Valletta's library.[33] In any case, he was clearly aware of the importance of such discoveries, for in *Study Methods*, he uses the circulation of blood as an analogy for his own work,[34] and remarks on how "the healing art has been able, not only to hazard guesses concerning many physiological functions and disorders, but to make these plainly discernible to the human eye."[35]

However, Harvey's theory of knowledge was very different to Vico's. Harvey cites Seneca's misinterpretation of Plato in which the idea, as the exemplar for the artist, can be either an immaterial conception or the actual model in front of the artist. As such it is simply the object of representation as opposed to the representation itself, and Harvey quotes Seneca's example of the portrait painter, to illustrate the point:

> When the artist would paint Virgil, his eye was upon Virgil himself. Virgil's face was his Idea and the exemplar of his future painting. What the artist takes from this face and imposes upon his work, that is the *eidos*. You ask what is the difference between them? It is this. One is the exemplar, or pattern, the other the copy taken from the pattern and imposed upon the work. The painter imitates the one and makes the other.

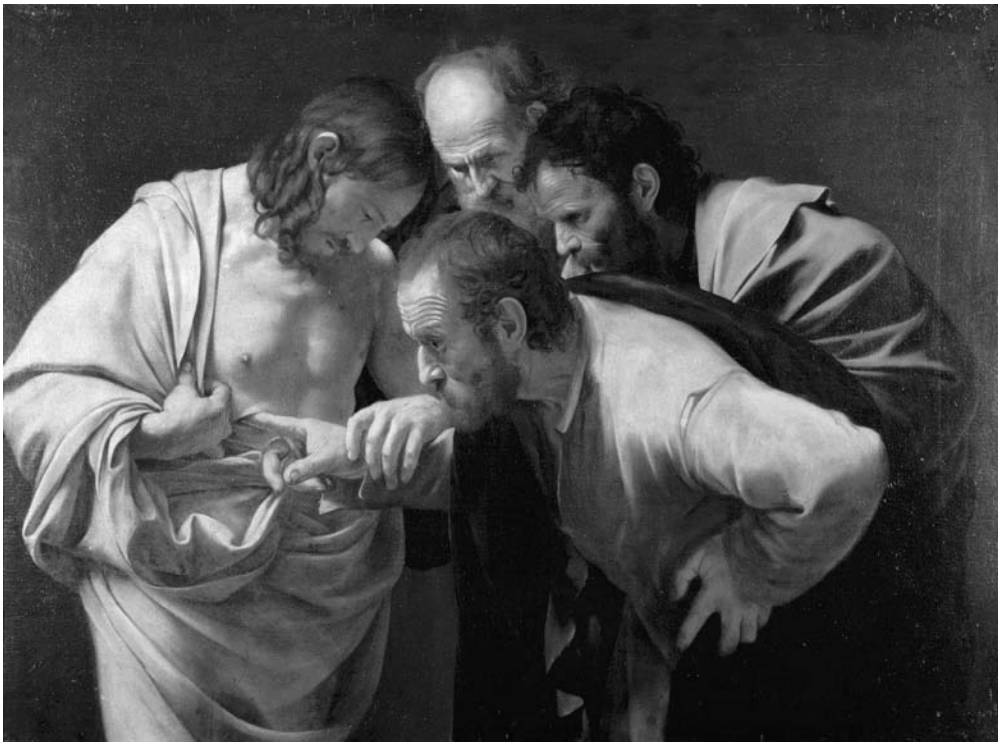
Ignoring what Seneca elsewhere says about the possibility that a painter might also draw an idea from within himself, Harvey makes this passage the basis for an extended analogy with scientific knowledge and draws the conclusion that "the former [*idea*] is concerned with a particular object, and is itself a particular and an individual; the latter [*eidos*] is a universal and common thing. In every artist and man of learning, the

former is a thing perceptible to the senses, clearer and more perfect; the latter belongs to the mind and is more obscure."[36]

The type of painter Harvey has in mind is one like Caravaggio, who paints whatever is before his eyes, and all the early sources testify that Caravaggio worked in just this way. Sandrart said that Caravaggio "was determined not to make a brushstroke that was not from life," and according to Mancini, his school was also "closely tied to nature which is always before them as they work."[37] Unlike Zeuxis and his seventeenth-century emulators, Caravaggio "recognized no other master than the model; and without selecting from the best forms," as Bellori puts it, "concentrated intently on looking at nature."[38]

As has often been noted, there could be no better representation of this approach than Caravaggio's *Incredulity of Saint Thomas* (figure 2.4), where the skeptical apostle inserts his finger into the scar on Christ's side and peers in.[39] Thomas says that he will not believe in the resurrection: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the place of the nails and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."[40] What Caravaggio's painting makes clear (particularly when compared with earlier treatments of the same subject), is that it is not enough for Thomas to place his finger in the wound; it is also necessary for him to be able to see himself doing so, just as the onlookers need to see him do it. The painting is about seeing as much as it is about touch. It suggests that seeing is as direct and certain a method of establishing the truth as touching something with one's own hands.

Although the early sources do not describe Caravaggio's practice as *autopsia* (the word had yet to cross from Latin to Italian, and is a late sixteenth-century neologism even in Latin) there can be no doubt that this is what it is. Indeed, the implied link between autopsy as a postmortem medical examination and *autopsia* as a form of seeing for oneself—



2.4.
Caravaggio, *Incredulity of Saint Thomas*. Sanssouci, Potsdam (© 2013 Photo SCALA, Florence / BPK Bildagentur fuer Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte, Berlin).

potentially common to artist and scientist alike—may be one reason why Caravaggio is said to have painted subjects as though dead, and even to have used corpses as models. Scannelli complained that Caravaggio's *Magdalen* "is not natural, except on a purely superficial level, because he gives it no life . . . so that one could say that everything appears dead."[41] And Bellori took this literally, suggesting that he had used "the bloated body of a dead woman" as a model for the *Death of the Virgin*.[42] By the time of Francesco Susinno, writing in

1724, the stories became more grotesque. For the *Raising of Lazarus* in Messina, Caravaggio was said to have asked to have a corpse dug up. When the workmen wanted to put it down because of the stench, Caravaggio drew his dagger and forced them to carry on. It was, Susinno notes, like the emperor Maxentius, who condemned people to die tied to corpses. It is not difficult to see all of this as a metaphor for naturalism itself. Being tied to nature is like being tied to the dead.

By 1700, Caravaggesque naturalism had been defeated, but scientific skepticism had not. Yet the parallels between art and science suggested a way forward. Perhaps scientific skepticism could be overcome in the same way as artistic naturalism, which had successfully turned to fantasy as a model for painting rendered ignoble by Caravaggio's naturalism. According to Bellori, "Guido [Reni] prided himself on painting beauty, not as it presented itself to his eyes [*si offriva a gli occhi*] but resembling the one that he saw in his Idea."[43] Vico agrees: "autopsy, or seeing with one's own eyes, is an uncertain rule of what is true."[44] Only by moving beyond *autopsia* can human beings discover the truth.

This is also what happened in prehistory, for according to Vico,

> the first kind of crude philosophy used by men was *autopsia* . . . (This was later used by Epicurus, for he, as a philosopher of the senses, was satisfied with the mere exhibition of things to the evidence of the senses.) And the senses of the first poetic nations were extremely lively.[45]

Autopsia, like atomism, reduces the world to the material, the particular, and the contingent. But even though furnished only with the senses and imagination,[46] early man was, beginning with the image of Jupiter and the thunderbolt, able to generate ideas "to which they reduced . . . all the

particulars pertaining to each genus . . . images for the most part of animate substances, of gods or heroes formed in their imagination."[47]

Now perhaps it becomes possible to see more clearly the point of Vico's analogy between the theological poet and the painter of fantasy. By transposing the history of painting, which had already overcome autoptic naturalism, onto the prehistory of the world, Vico is developing a refutation of contemporary scientific skepticism. Like painting, history demonstrates just how inadequate the epistemology of the skeptics actually is. Painting could never have progressed on the basis of *autopsia*, and nor could the social life of humanity. Just as painting developed by using the idea, so the civil institutions of humanity presuppose the use of *fantasia* to make the truths that have allowed human history to progress. History itself refutes skepticism, because if the claims of the skeptics were true, there would be no history.

Light in the Darkness

One metaphor spreads out across all of these discourses—the darkness of the skeptical error, the "thick darkness" that envelops the giants of prehistory, and the equally thick darkness of painting unilluminated by the "light of the imagination" (*luce della fantasia*, as Bellori calls it).[48] In every case it is the darkness of a godless materialism, the darkness of the senses unilluminated by ideas. Vico describes it thus:

> The fool deprived of his freedom is confined in a dungeon of impenetrable darkness and surrounded by terrifying things. In this dungeon not the slightest cleft is open through which the thinnest ray of light can pass. No truthful superintendent presides here, and the deceitful guard of the dungeon delights in giving false

> reports from the world outside . . . The dark dungeon is our body, the warders are opinion, falsity and error. The guards are the senses.[49]

This dungeon is a version of Plato's cave where, as Vico describes it in *Vici Vindiciae*, men "pass all of life . . . with their backs to the entrance, seeing only the shadows they themselves project on the wall of the cave."[50]

Caravaggio painted "as though in a very dark room . . . with the walls painted black."[51] And the darkness of his paintings soon became a metaphor for the darkness of the error in which the artist and his followers languished, like Plato's prisoners chained within the cave. According to Bellori, Caravaggio "did not know how to come out of the cellar," and "never brought any of his figures out into broken sunlight."[52] Within this space, which Louis Marin calls "the closed arcanian space . . . of the black box," light is allowed to enter only from high up, falling straight down on the principal part of the body, and leaving the rest in shadow.[53] The effect is to give to all light the intensity and immediacy of lightning, "dazzling, blinding, stupefying."[54]

In Vico's account, too, the knowledge offered by the senses is also a form of chiaroscuro. Rather than shadows projected on a wall (as in Plato's cave) Vico thinks in terms of bodies lit up as if by lamplight at night: "When man's mind knows a thing distinctly, it sees it by lamplight at night. For while the mind sees it thus, the thing's circumstances are lost from its sight." In contrast, "God's mind sees things in the sunlight of his truth. In other words, while it sees a thing, it knows an infinity of things along with the thing that it sees." For this reason, Vico suggests, knowing distinctly must be considered of limited value, "a vice of the human mind, rather than a virtue."[55] Just as those in Plato's cave are in danger of being

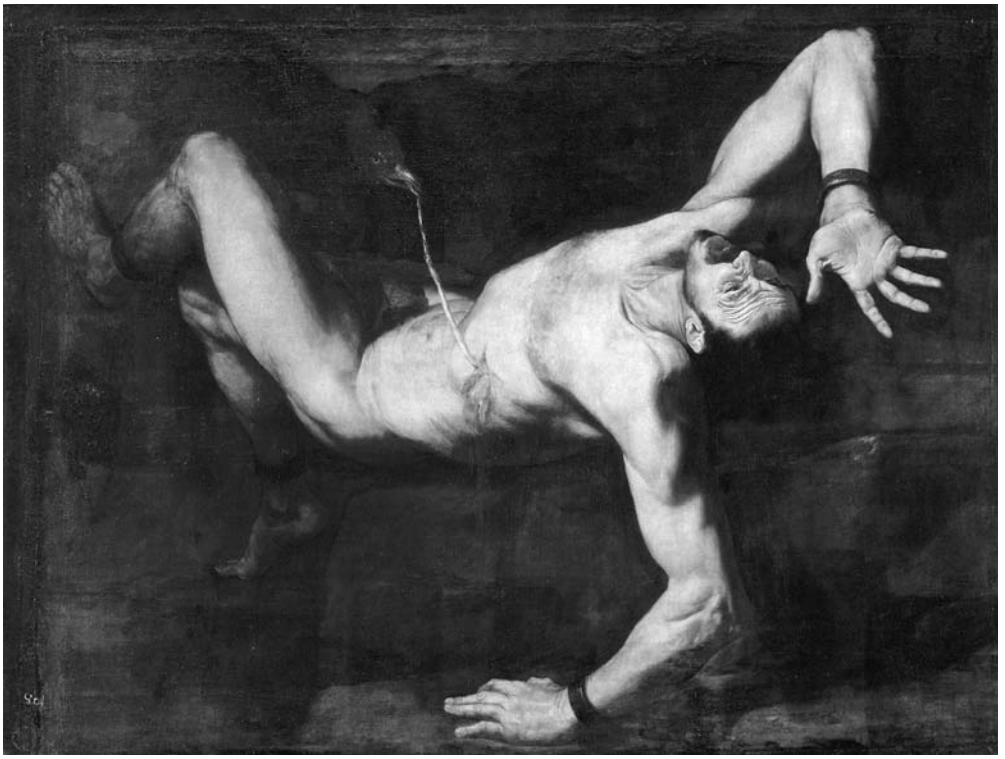
satisfied with shadows rather than ideas, so Vico's materialist is in danger of taking what is seen by lamplight at night for what is visible in the light of the sun.

Vico's description of the decontextualized way objects are seen by lamplight finds an echo in De Dominici's description of Caravaggio's "dark manner lost amongst the shadows," where the outlines of things are swallowed up in the darkness and disappear.[56] It can be seen to disorienting effect in Caravaggio's *Acts of Mercy* (figure 2.5), where the innkeeper's torch boldly thrust into the center of the painting offers the only visible source of light, throwing some features into sharp relief while others threaten to disappear into the darkness. The lighting fragments the painting: there are no complete bodies, and there is no continuous space. What we are shown is so clear and dramatic that it seems indubitable, yet we have no way of telling how it connects to anything else, or even what is represented.

In a brilliant analogy, Vico compares the experience of seeing by lamplight to the experience of pain. Both are extremely distinct, but they tell us little about the world beyond: "For instance, I am in pain and yet I do not know any form of pain, and I know no limits of the soul's illness. This cognition is indefinite and, being indefinite, it is fitting for man. The idea of pain is vivid and illuminating like nothing else."[57] The illustration is a striking one, for it conjures up some of the most disturbing images in Caravaggesque painting, where the faces of those in pain are set in the darkest of shadows, the outlines of their contorted features disappearing into a halo of darkness.

2.5.
Caravaggio, *The Seven Acts of Mercy*, Pio Monte della Misericordia, Naples (Photo: Luciano Pedicini).





2.6.
Jusepe de Ribera, *Tityus*, Prado, Madrid
(© Museo Nacional del Prado–Madrid).

Ribera's *Tityus*, painted while the artist was still under the influence of Caravaggio, is one terrifying example (figure 2.6). It shows the Titan chained down as his liver is eaten by an eagle as a punishment for trying to rape Latona. Vico noted that in the case of both Tityus and Prometheus, who suffered a similar punishment, their being "rendered immobile by fear was expressed by the Latins in the heroic phrase *terrore defixi* and the painters depict them chained hand and foot with such links upon the mountains."[58] What painters could Vico

have had in mind? The punishment of Tityus was not a common subject, and so it is likely that Vico is thinking either of Ribera's composition, commissioned for a Dutch patron in 1632 but known in other versions as well, or one of the several variants by Ribera's pupils.

The punishment of Tityus serves as a reminder that the "error and darkness" in which Caravaggio's followers remained was not just the literal darkness of tenebrism or of the erroneous methods of painting, but a spiritual darkness as well. So when, as De Dominici puts it, Reni provided the ray of light that chased away all the shadows of Caravaggio,[59] he too was defeating evil, just like Saint Michael in his famous painting, whose victory over the devil symbolized that of the church over its adversaries.

The iconography of Saint Michael was particularly prominent in Naples.[60] Luca Giordano painted Saint Michael on several occasions.[61] The most dramatic version, now in Vienna (figure 2.7), is closely based on Reni's much-imitated painting (see figure 1.8) but changes Reni's diagonal emphasis to a vertical one. It shows Michael, sword in hand, his cloak billowing out behind him, as with the tip of his perfectly balanced right foot he consigns Lucifer to the abyss. The compositional triumph is the lightness of the pressure Michael's foot exerts on the spot between Lucifer's shoulder and neck. Reni's Michael stands firmly on Satan's head, and Giordano's other Michaels use the entire sole of the foot. But this Michael is balletically poised at a point in the center of the painting. This one point of contact is all that is required to connect the two worlds.

Whereas Michael is modeled on Reni's version of the saint, formed according to the ideal, the rebel angels refer back to Ribera's tortured giants and malevolent satyrs. Giordano was initially trained within the school of Ribera, who remained an influence even after he had visited Rome and Venice. Even



De Dominici noted that Luca retained something of his manner, which "was not worthy to be compared to that of the best masters."[62] Here, however, Ribera's manner is reproduced to play an iconographical role. When Michael looks down toward the screaming figure in the lower right, the face is that of Ribera's *Marsyas* (Museo di Capodimonte, Naples), turned upright and placed between his hands (figure 2.7a), just like the satyr shown in the background of Ribera's composition (which Giordano had earlier copied in reverse).

Giordano's painting is a play of contrasts—in tonality, color, and artistic sources. The triumph of Michael over the rebellious angels is shown by the dominance of diffused light, blue, and the ideal forms of Reni, over chiaroscuro, flesh tones, and the grotesque realism of early Ribera. The angel's blue torso is particularly important. According to Bellori, Caravaggio had considered the color blue a poison, but here (as so often in Giordano's mature paintings) it anchors the central visual drama of the scene. Bellori saw Caravaggio himself as a poison. This is the antidote.[63] The painting demonstrates that the struggle between Caravaggesque naturalism and Bolognese classicism, which had dominated seventeenth-century



2.7. *(left)* Luca Giordano, *Saint Michael*, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (Photo: AKG Images).

2.7a. Detail of 2.7.

Neapolitan painting, could be mobilized to make a point—a point that is both artistic and theological.

There is a curious circularity to this, for Caravaggio, the Anti-Michelangelo (as Carducho called him) was identified as an atheist, and atheists were likened to giants,[64] whose transition from the merely sensory experience of thunder and lightning to the idea of divine providence exemplifies the wider point that Vico seeks to convey through his imagery of darkness and light. The senses imprison us in darkness: pain, for all its indubitable certainty, is not true knowledge; the lightning is not the light. Nevertheless, the senses are the starting point: they "perform their function faithfully even when they deceive" because "physical truths are the opaque bodies by means of which we distinguish the light of metaphysical things."[65] Men can make truth out of certainty (as Zeuxis made Helen from the maidens of Croton), just as the giants found the light of divine providence through the lightning. All that is required is imagination, the *fantasia* that takes us from certainty to truth.

THREE
Fantastic Painting

The Sacristy of San Paolo Maggiore

The Theatine church of San Paolo Maggiore stands on Via dei Tribunali at the junction with Piazza San Lorenzo (figure 3.1), one of the busiest crossroads in the center of the city. It was built on the site of the ancient Temple of the Dioscuri, so the new dedication was appropriate—Castor and Pollux had been the name of Paul's ship in Acts 28, and Peter and Paul had replaced them as patron saints of travelers.

The portico of the old temple, complete with its ancient Greek inscription on the architrave, became the porch of the new church, and as a young man, Vico would have seen it on many occasions coming up Via San Gregorio Armeno from his family home on Via San Biagio dei Librai. But on June 5, 1688, an earthquake struck; the portico was destroyed, and all but two of its Corinthian columns were reduced to rubble. The fragments were left lying in the street for years afterward. For Vico, who moved to Vicolo dei Giganti (the second



3.1.
Via dei Tribunali, Naples, with San Paolo Maggiore to the left, from Domenico Antonio Parrino, *Napoli, città nobilissima* (Naples, 1700) (© The British Library Board).

turning on the left in the engraving from Parrino's *Napoli, città nobilissima*) in 1699, the ruins of the old temple would have served as a daily reminder of the destruction of antiquity, and in the frontispiece to the *New Science*, a fragment of a Corinthian column is shown lying on the ground (see figure 4.1).

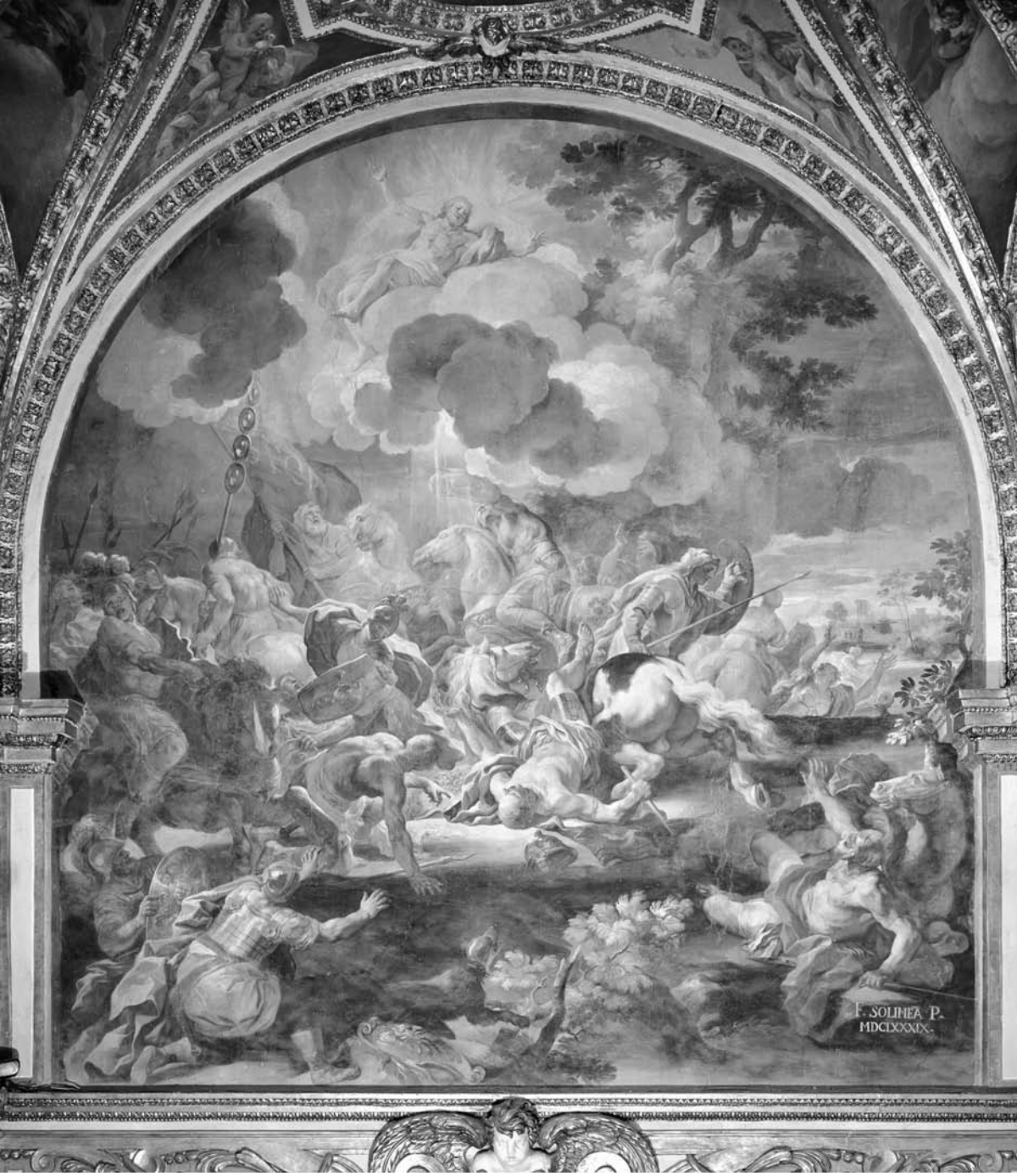
The earthquake was considered by many to be divine retribution for the sins of the city of Naples, so when in the immediate aftermath Francesco Solimena was commissioned to fresco the sacristy of San Paolo Maggiore, scenes of divine judgment were natural subjects. The stories of Saul and of Simon Magus both have their origin in the Acts of the Apostles, a work of particular importance to the Theatine order, but both also appear in the *Golden Legend*, where the conversion of Saul is retold in the same terms, but the story of Simon

much elaborated. It is here that the story of Simon's fall is to be found, contained within the life of Saint Peter.

The first of the paintings to be completed, in 1689, was the *Conversion of Saul* (figure 3.2). Saul, the chief persecutor of the early Christian community in Jerusalem, was on his way to Damascus when "suddenly a light flashed from the sky all around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' 'Tell me, Lord,' he said, 'who are you?' The voice answered, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.'" Paul, as he was later known, was blinded by the light, and had to be led to Damascus, where he remained blind for three days.[1]

Light remains the central motif in every telling of the story. According to Paul's later testimony, the voice went on to say, "I have appeared to you for a purpose: to appoint you my servant and witness, to testify both to what you have seen and to what you shall see of me . . . I send you [to the Gentiles] to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, from the dominion of Satan to God."[2] The light blinded Paul, so that he could in turn become "a light for the Gentiles," bringing them to the light in their turn.[3]

For Vico's giants, "the true light of God shone forth" in "the flash of the thunderbolts."[4] What sort of light was it that threw Saul to the ground? According to Jacobus de Voragine in the *Golden Legend*, "the divine light was sudden in order to frighten the bold one, and immense to bring the haughty, overbearing one down to lowly humility, and heavenly to change his fleshly understanding and make it heavenly."[5] In this respect, it had the same effect as Jupiter's thunderbolt, which prompted the giants "who had warred against heaven in their atheism" to "subject themselves to a higher power which they imagined as Jove, and, all amazement as they were all pride and cruelty, humble themselves before a divinity."[6]



3.2.
Francesco Solimena, *Conversion of Saul*, Sacristy of San Paolo Maggiore, Naples (Photo: Luciano Pedicini).

Paul's conversion was considered by him to be an appearance of the resurrected Christ on a par with that experienced by the other apostles.[7] Like Thomas, he is offered an individual revelation. But Paul is denied the (false) certainties of *autopsia*. According to Harvey, "He who . . . forms no conception of the subject from the evidence of his own eyes, is virtually blind."[8] And Paul, far from seeing for himself, is actually blinded by the light—as Voragine puts it, "blinded to be enlightened in his darkened intelligence."[9] Here, as in Vico's story of the giants, the lightning is not the enlightenment, but it produces enlightenment nevertheless.

Solimena has imagined the conversion of Paul as something like a battle scene, with horses and soldiers falling all over the place. He was not the first to do so. Giordano's paintings of the subject do the same, both following Rubens, who painted the subject several times. Bartoli had used the example of a battle scene painted by a blind man to illustrate the improbability of the theory of atomism. Here, according to De Dominici, Solimena displays the very qualities that chance could never produce: "beauty of coloring, nobility of appearance, perfect ideas, diversity of physiognomy, and excellent composition with the most beautiful contrapposto."[10]

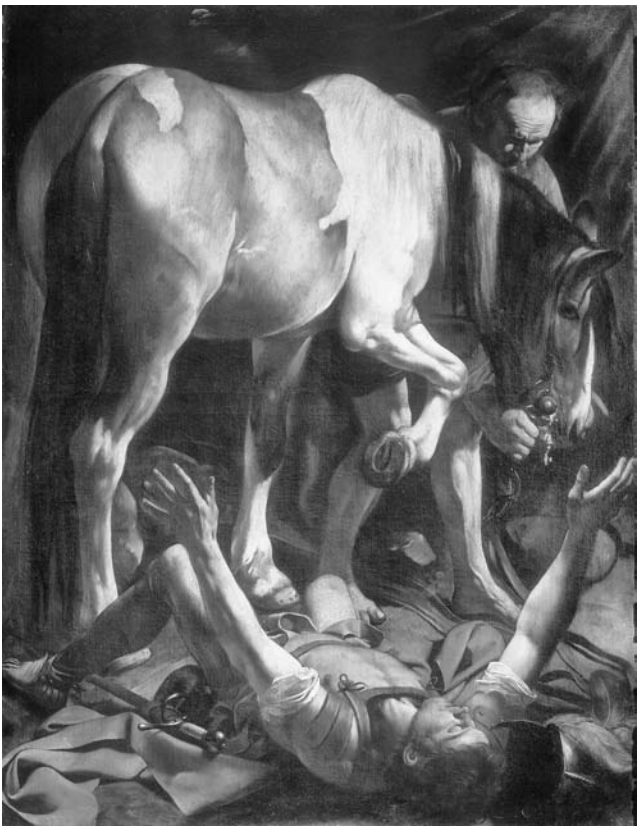
It is the unexpected flash of light breaking through the clouds that causes the horses to bolt and the soldiers to run in fear (figure 3.2a). It hits the edges of things, transforming the cloak of the horseman on the left into a sheer ridge of light, striking the side of his horse's head so hard that it shies away, and leaving the soldier ahead of them completely backlit, save for the upper edge of his shield. In every case, this heavenly light exerts a powerful centrifugal force, its impact pushing figures out from the center of the composition toward the aureole of shadow that surrounds it. And yet the movement of the viewer's gaze, and that of the figures in the foreground,



3.2a.
Detail of 3.2.

goes in the other direction, into the picture. The painting is also lit from the top left where the natural light from the window of the sacristy doubles with the softer light emanating from Christ above the clouds. This is the light that is reflected on the back of the soldier's breastplate in the left foreground and through which the figure on the lower right stretches out his arm. Despite the dramatic chiaroscuro of the central scene, no contours are lost in the shadows, for there is always another source of light to hold them in the visual field.

The contrast with earlier representations of the subject is striking. In Michelangelo's fresco in the Cappella Paolina in the Vatican, the shaft of light seems to have been excavated through



3.3.
Caravaggio, *Conversion of Saul*, Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome (© 2013 Photo SCALA, Florence / Fondo Edifiel di Cuito – Min. del'Interno).

the air, barely disturbing the even lighting of the scene itself. In Caravaggio's version in Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome (figure 3.3), the scene is lit solely by the divine light falling directly from above; everything else is darkness, making it difficult to distinguish the relationships between the figures. No one is looking at anything, because the light does not create a unified visual space (Paul's right leg, the horse's left front leg, and the servant's right



3.4.
Francesco Solimena, *Fall of Simon Magus*, Sacristy of San Paolo Maggiore, Naples (Photo: Luciano Pedicini).

foot all appear to occupy the same indeterminate location). In Solimena's version, however, the scene is unified by the balance between the two sources of light: one signals the unexpected divine intervention, the other provides order in the chaos.

Whereas Paul is represented by the most dramatic event in his own life, Simon Peter is represented by the story of his nemesis, the other Simon whose rivalry he here overcomes (figure 3.4). This is unusual. A more obvious pendant, used by both Michelangelo and Caravaggio, was the crucifixion of Saint Peter. An alternative pairing, found in Giordano's paintings in the Pallavicini collection in Rome, was that of the conversion of Saul and the death of Julian the Apostate. The iconography of the sacristy is, in a way, a synthesis of these two types. It retains the pairing with Peter while at the same time showing another enemy of the church defeated. Here, however, the juxtaposition is designed to counterpose not two types of battle (as in Giordano's pendants) but two types of fall—that of Paul from his horse and Simon from the sky—brought about by divine power.

The story of the conversion of Paul works around the axis of light and darkness, while that of Simon Magus is governed by another dichotomy—truth and falsity. According to the *Golden Legend*, the initial encounter with Peter took place in Jerusalem, but Simon later went to Rome, where he was worshipped as a god during the reign of Nero. Simon "claimed to be the source of all truth" and tried to demonstrate his divinity by ostentatious miracles, to which Peter responded that "every time you speak you lie." After various encounters with the apostles, in which his mendacity was repeatedly exposed, Simon had finally had enough:

> He . . . set a day upon which he was to ascend to heaven, because he did not deign to dwell on earth any longer.

> The day arrived and he climbed a high tower—or, according to Linus, he went up to the top of the Capitol—wearing a crown of laurel. He jumped off and began to fly. Paul said to Peter: "I'm the one to pray now; you're the one to command." To Nero he said: "This man Peter is truthful, you and yours are seducers." Peter said to Paul: "Paul, raise your head and look up." When Paul looked up, he saw Simon flying and said to Peter: "Peter, what are you waiting for? Finish what you've started because the Lord is already calling us." Then Peter said: "I adjure you, angels of Satan, you who are holding Simon up in the air, I adjure you in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Stop holding him up and let him fall." They released him at once and he crashed to the ground, his skull was fractured and he expired.[11]

This is the scene depicted in Solimena's fresco, which, according to De Dominici, shows "a crowd of people well distributed around the throne of the Emperor Nero" and "the holy apostles, offering a prayer to god, that the holy faith might be exulted by the punishment of that proud boaster of miracles, who abandoned by his demons . . . falls from the clouds, with fatal damage to himself, and to the stupefaction of Nero and the surrounding witnesses of the astounding spectacle."[12]

Peter and Paul explained to Nero that just as there were two substances in Christ, the human and the divine, so in Simon there were two substances, the human and the diabolical. It is no wonder, therefore, that Simon Magus is specifically mentioned in the Roman rite of exorcism, where it states that as Satan was made to "fall like lightning" from heaven, he was again "openly struck . . . down in the person of Simon Magus."[13] It is a theological context that places the fall of Simon Magus (figure 3.4a) in the same iconographical tradi-

tion as other falling figures in the Neapolitan painting, not just the numerous representations of Saint Michael and the fall of the rebel angels, but Mattia Preti's vertiginous *Christ and Satan on the High Mountain* (figure 3.5).

What then is the significance of Solimena's paintings? Both show the punishment of enemies of the Christian religion. Given that the sacristy was painted between the denunciation of the Neapolitan atheists and their arrest, it has sometimes been read as a symbolic commentary on the immediate crisis, for the atomists were themselves atheists and rebels against God.[14] But it can also be viewed in the context of the defeat of an earlier form of atomism—atomism in painting. Vicente Carducho had compared Caravaggio to the Antichrist, who "with false and strange miracles and monstrous deeds would carry with him to damnation a very large number of people moved by his works,"[15] and the description also fits Simon Magus, for he, too, tried through visual demonstration to show that falsity is truth. By illustrating this subject alongside Paul's anti-autoptic conversion, Solimena simultaneously shows just how comprehensively this impious rebellion had been overcome, and (by implication) how that of the philosophical atomists would be as well. All rebels against God will fall, just as the rebel angels had.

These are anti-Caravaggesque narratives, painted in the antithesis of his style. They also demonstrate the power of the word: the unseen voice of Jesus speaking to Paul, the words of Peter obeyed even by the demons. It was a classical commonplace that the words of an orator could strike like a flash of lightning, and Vico cites Demosthenes as an example.[16] In both paintings, the importance of hearing rather than sight is illustrated by blindness—the blindness of Paul and that of the blind man in the *Fall of Simon Magus*, who, as De Dominici emphasizes, is listening attentively to all that happens.[17] Coming



3.4a.
Detail of 3.4.

around the corner from the Vicolo dei Giganti, Vico, the young professor of rhetoric, could have found in the sacristy of San Paolo Maggiore visible proof of what words could do. He would also have discovered before returning to the arms of his family (like the giants to their caves) many of the elements that he would later use to stage his primal scene: the proud falling and humbled by divine power; the thunderbolts and lightning that do not themselves illuminate, but lead to enlightenment.

If, in retrospect, the paintings in the sacristy seem like a preliminary staging of Vico's primeval scene, this is maybe because they are also a restaging of Vico's own primal scene. He opens his *Autobiography* with this story:

> He was a boy of high spirits and impatient of rest; but at the age of seven he fell headfirst from the top of a



3.5.
Mattia Preti, *Christ and Satan on the High Mountain*, Capodimonte, Naples (Photo: Luciano Pedicini).

> ladder to the floor below and remained a good five hours without motion or consciousness. The right side of the cranium was fractured, but the skin was not broken. The fracture gave rise to a large tumour, and the child suffered much loss of blood from the many deep lancings. The surgeon, indeed, observing the broken cranium and considering the large period of unconsciousness, predicted that he would either die of it or grow up an idiot. However by God's grace neither part of his prediction came true, but as a result of this mischance he grew up with a melancholy and irritable temperament such as belongs to men of ingenuity and depth, who thanks to the one, are quick as lightning in perception, and thanks to the other, take no pleasure in verbal cleverness or falsehood.[18]

It is an extraordinary first paragraph, telling us both too much and too little. One or two things resonate, however. He is climbing a ladder, like the "flight of steps" formed by the Platonic hierarchy of ideas.[19] He falls, and, like Simon Magus, fractures his skull. But he lives, and as a result of the fall, his *ingegno* flashes like lightning.

Acutezza/Argutezza

The final sentence of Vico's account of his childhood fall, "che per l'ingegno balenino in acutezze, per la riflessione non si dilettino dell'arguzie e del falso," makes a distinction between *acutezza* and *arguzia* or *argutezza*.[20] The way in which Vico positions himself relative to these terms at the very start of his autobiography suggests something of their importance within seventeenth-century literary theory. Both words basically mean "wit," but insofar as they are differentiated, *argutezza* refers to wit's more fanciful manifestations.

Vico's perspective on the two terms emerges most clearly in *Vici Vindiciae*, his defense of the first edition of the *New Science*, where (as he himself summarizes it in the continuation to his *Autobiography*): "He says that wit [*ingegno*] always has truth for its object, and is the father of acute sayings, whereas feeble fancy [*fantasia debole*] is the mother of argute sayings."[21] So whereas "an acute remark refers to one thing as appearing different from, but really being the same as, another [that is, truth disguised as falseness], an argute saying concerns something that appeared identical to, but later is revealed to be different from, another [that is, falseness veiled in some appearance of truth]."[22]

Not everyone made a distinction of this kind. Italian baroque theorists like Emanuele Tesauro had defended both forms, while proponents of French classicism, like Dominique Bouhours, whose work Vico knew through Giuseppe Orsi, condemned them. Vico takes an intermediate position based on differentiating between the acute and the argute. Unlike Bouhours who, according to Vico, allowed the acute to encompass both "the false which appears true, and the true which appears false,"[23] Vico insists that falseness appearing as truth is characteristic not of acute sayings but of argute ones, and that the former instruct, whereas the latter deceive:

> Having heard an acute saying one would speedily learn the truth. But having heard an argute saying, he is defrauded of his own expectation, and, while expecting the truth, which is the native desire of the human intellect, he discovers the false.[24]

It is precisely this pleasure, the pleasure of being deceived, from which Vico claims immunity on the basis of his childhood fall. He is, he protests, of a temperament that takes "no pleasure in verbal cleverness or falsehood." However, this

claim must be read in conjunction with the admission, only a few pages later in the *Autobiography*, that his youthful poems employed the "most corrupt styles of modern poetry" and were "nothing but an exercise of the mind [*ingegno*] in feats of wit [*argutezza*], which affords pleasure only through falsehood."[25] There is an evident contradiction here. Thanks to his childhood fall, Vico takes no pleasure in *arguzie*, and yet as a young man he abandons himself to them.

How then to interpret Vico's fall and its consequences? Acute and argute are made in the same way: Tesauro had claimed that *argutezze* were the product of *ingegno*, and that someone was more ingenious if they could "understand and conjoin more distant things,"[26] while Vico states that acute remarks "bind together within a system of common relationships whose truth is hidden things that to ordinary people seem utterly diverse and disparate." For Vico, the difference between the two is that acute remarks demonstrate that they are "mutually interrelated, held together by a harmonious bond," whereas argute remarks compare "mere names of things . . . or present some of them absurdly or unsuitably."[27]

Vico's fall gave him both ingenuity and depth. The former is what is required to put things together, to make *acutezze* or *argutezze*. The latter makes him resistant to *argutezze,* which are "displeasing to grave and serious minds."[28] Yet this did not happen right away. The fall is at best a proleptic anticipation of a much later conversion. His last exercise in the baroque idiom was the memorial poem composed for Antonio Carafa (whose biography he would later write). He recited it on June 5, 1693, at a meeting of the Accademia degli Uniti held at San Paolo Maggiore. The poem includes numerous *argutezze*, but Vico never wrote with quite this degree of abandon again, and the poem marks his transition from the baroque to the neo-Petrarchan style.[29] Vico's immunity to *argutezze* there-

fore takes effect not after he falls and fractures his skull but after a visit to the place where there is a painting of the same thing happening to someone else.

Did Solimena's painting cure Vico? According to Ferdinando Bologna, "the painting of the sacristy of San Paolo Maggiore conducts the baroque tumult into a crescendo of lyrical passages that the language of eighteenth-century letters would have called *argutezze*."[30] Would Vico have recognized them as such? Within art theory, the term was not used. But for Tesauro, there had been no distinction between verbal and visual *argutezze*, for both were metaphors.[31] Vico, too, thought of visual and verbal metaphors as interchangeable.[32] So was there a visual equivalent to the false unity of *argutezze*, a type of painting that was the equivalent of the poetry to which Vico abandoned himself but in which he later claimed to take no pleasure?

Giordano's *Scuola ereticale*

One way to answer this question is to examine the visual/verbal analogy in more detail with reference to the work of artists Vico knew, and there was perhaps no painter with whom he was more familiar than Luca Giordano. De Dominici opens the first edition of his life of the painter with the familiar story of Zeuxis, whose Helen was a pleasing union of all the most admirable and rare qualities that nature had divided into many, and a most perfect ideal of beauty. Giordano worked the same way as Zeuxis, but with a difference. With careful study and labor, he had united into one "all the most excellent styles of the most celebrated painters that had flourished before him."[33]

Zeuxis had created an ideal form from a selection of natural models; here, the paradigm is extended to cover Giordano's creation of a style from those of other painters. This was not in itself a novel move. Malvasia claimed that Ludovico Carracci,

by uniting and mixing the qualities of Correggio, Raphael, Titian, Michelangelo, and other great painters, had been able to "recreate and form out of them all taken together the Helen of his deeply considered idea."[34] But there were potentially limits to how far such eclecticism could go. Annibale wrote that despite his admiration for both Correggio and Titian, "I cannot link them together and do not want to do so."[35]

Giordano seems to have had no such inhibitions, and his sources were more varied still. De Dominici claims that in Rome he profited not just from the delicacy of Cortona, but also the intelligence and profundity of Michelangelo, the proportions and tact of Raphael, and the spirit and boldness of Polidoro, all in order to construct "the superb edifice of his new style, and to show to the glory of the world his own true character, which, deriving from the best masters, made a pleasing mixture of the old and the new."[36] In fact, Rome was not his only source of inspiration. In Venice, he studied other artists too—Titian, Bassano, Tintoretto, and, above all, Veronese—and then added them to the mix to perfect what De Dominici calls his "beautiful, charming, yet astonishing style."[37]

A more hostile view of Giordano was offered by Francesco di Maria, who criticized the Messina paintings (publicly exhibited in 1678) by saying that they were not painted as nature required, and that their colors were too bright and gaudy. He tried to gain the support of Micco Spadaro for this view, but Spadaro only defended Giordano's "harmonious style." Di Maria, on the other hand, called Giordano's pupils a "heretical school that was deviating from the right path with its damnable free thinking [*libertà di coscienza*]." Giordano himself merely laughed and replied that Di Maria's pupils were "obstinate Jews, stuck in the staleness of their laws" and fixated on their "stunted drawing." A good painter was "one who knows better than others how to gratify the public."[38]

What exactly was the nature of this heresy that Di Maria attributes to Giordano? Anyone who read De Dominici's life of Giordano when it appeared in the 1728 edition of Bellori's *Lives* would have been reminded of Bellori's critique of mannerism. At the start of the seventeenth century, Bellori claimed, "art was contested by two opposite extremes, one dependent entirely on nature, the other on the imagination [*fantasia*] . . . the former copied bodies purely as they appear to the eye, without selection; the latter looked at nature not at all but followed the freedom of instinct [*libertà dell' istinto*]."[39]

Looking at the surviving Messina painting (see figure 1.3), it is not hard to see that Giordano, in distancing himself from the Caravaggesque naturalism of Ribera, might be thought to have gone to the other extreme, like the artists Bellori describes who "abandoning the study of nature, corrupted art with the *maniera*." By this Bellori meant artists who worked from a "fantastic idea, based on artistic practice and not on imitation."[40] Even Solimena, who otherwise had nothing but praise for Giordano's work, conceded that his faces were rather similar, especially those of old people, and that this happened because they were done "*di maniera*, without nature in front of him."[41] De Dominici defends Giordano, and yet he provides the evidence for this conclusion as well, in his description of Giordano's "pleasing mixture of the old and the new."

But is Giordano's *libertà di coscienza* the same as the *libertà dell' istinto* of late mannerism? Was Giordano also one of those who (as Bellori has it) "do everything on the basis of practice, without knowing the truth [and] depict spectres instead of figures"?[42] Bellori himself implies as much, for in an echo of Giordano's dispute with Di Maria, he has Carlo Maratta condemn those who teach that "whoever has fine colour possesses ninety-nine percent of painting." As a result, he says "instead of natural form painting takes on the appearance of a disembodied

spectre and a phantasm, remote from the truth that holds us to good and perfect imitation."[43] Onofrio Giannone, a pupil of Solimena, who makes this connection in *Giunte sulle vite dei' pittori napoletani* (1771–73), explicitly states that Giordano "observed nature little, and worked *di maniera*."[44]

Can Giordano's eclecticism then also be considered a form of *argutezza*, an argutic combination of styles? The vices described by Bellori and Vico are both disorders of the imagination that generate falsehood by combining things inappropriately. How easily could one be seen as an example of the other? It was a commonplace, repeated by Vico, that words are to poetry what colors are to painting, so Vico's claim that the diagnostic difference between acute and argute sayings is the substitutability of a synonym without loss of meaning potentially had a direct parallel in art theory.[45] Paolo Pino had already argued that a skillful painter should be able to substitute one color for another without losing the desired effect,[46] so it is plausible to suppose that Vico would have considered an argute painting to be one where the colors are unsubstitutable, a false unity where the superficial harmony of the colors served only to disguise the disharmony of the composition.

This was, in fact, the crux of the debate about Giordano: whether what De Dominici refers to as his "harmony of colours" also constituted a "harmonious style." Vico offers no comment on this dispute, but an awareness of it is perhaps implicit in his anecdote about Titian. Bellori had complained that mannerists "copy the ideas of others . . . [and] appear to have taken an oath to the brushstrokes of their masters."[47] That is why Titian used brushes the size of brooms.

Solimena's *Variazione di maniera*

Solimena's paintings are also full of figures borrowed from other artists. He defended himself from the accusation that

he copied too much by pointing to Luca Giordano, saying that he had done so to an even greater extent, but always introduced his own style, remodeling and transforming his sources in the process.[48] According to De Dominici, when asked whether he would like to be compared to the great Bolognese painters or to Luca Giordano, Solimena opted for the latter: his battle scene in the Tesoro of the Certosa di San Martino could be matched by no one else, for it was so unified that "it appeared to be painted in a single breath, and with a single stroke of the brush."[49]

Giordano had praised the San Paolo frescoes,[50] but by using the example of Giordano in his own defense, Solimena acknowledged that he was himself open to the same criticism. Yet his situation was in some ways very different. Unlike Giordano, he had not traveled widely, and his first and seemingly only visit to Rome was around 1700. He had initially trained with his father, Angelo Solimena, but his most important influences were Luca Giordano and Pietro da Cortona. According to De Dominici, Solimena painted under their influence up until the thirty-second year of his life, after which he formed his own style.[51] Solimena was born in 1657, so that places the frescoes at San Paolo Maggiore at the pivotal moment in his career, after which he developed his mature style. What is the nature and significance of this *total variazione di maniera*, as De Dominici describes it?[52]

De Dominici does not give any diagnostic indication of the stylistic change itself, but the visual evidence is clearer, and the impact of the change was almost immediate. The *Miracle of Saint John of God* (1691) (figure 3.6) reinterprets some of the figures from the vault of the sacristy at San Paolo, but they are now bathed in a somber light and heavy shadow. Solimena's model for this scene was not Caravaggio, or even Ribera, but Mattia Preti, whose votive paintings of the plague of 1656 he



3.6.
Francesco Solimena, *Miracle of Saint John of God*, Museo Civico di Castelnuovo, Naples (Photo: Luciano Pedicini).

particularly admired. What he learned from Preti was not just the technique of chiaroscuro but an appreciation of the direct observation of nature. De Dominici emphasizes how in one of these paintings Preti reproduced scenes he claimed to have seen "with his own eyes" on the steps of the nearby church of Santo Spirito where he saw a large nude man, a slave, in the act of dragging a corpse.[53]

It was a lesson Solimena took with him. According to De Dominici,

> When he had found the movement of the figure, he always drew it completely nude from life, and afterwards clothed it with drapery similarly done from life. He did nothing without the model before him, not only of the drapery but of all those incidental things that crop up in this or that history or fable . . . and in this he imitated the *cavaliere* Calabrese [Mattia Preti] . . . in order to proceed with more certainty.[54]

Earlier in the *Lives*, De Dominici had described the transformation in the style of an earlier generation of Neapolitan painters who had seen the light and been converted from Caravaggism by the work of Reni. Solimena's *total variazione* is clearly not of this kind. Giordano's later style might have represented a *scuola ereticale*, but it was at the opposite pole from that of the atheism of the Caravaggisti and the atomists. Were there also ways in which someone might be converted from this heresy to orthodoxy, rather as the atomists of painting were converted from atheism to orthodoxy?

Solimena's *total variazione di maniera* represents something akin to such a reverse conversion, and it can be located in the context of the wider shift in taste away from the high baroque fostered by the Accademia degli Arcadi, founded in Rome in

1690. Although primarily concerned with literature, the aesthetics of the Arcadia had implications for the visual arts as well. Francesco Antonio Gravina, one of the early members, noted that "to connoisseurs of painting an image painted with dark colours which, in that darkness expresses well what it wants to express is more pleasing than one which, although painted in pleasing and vivid colours, is lacking in expression."[55] It is a view that not only echoes the critique of Giordano's bright colors, but also prefigures Solimena's later claim "that security in painting comes from mastery of shadows . . . which comes only from nature, for the memory can never ensure accuracy in the work of someone who paints *di maniera.*"[56]

Vico, like Solimena, became a member of the Arcadia, and he also acknowledged the importance of shadow in painting, complaining that although the Chinese "have most refined talents and make so many marvellous delicate things, [they] do not yet know how to make shadows in painting, against which highlights can stand out."[57] Is there then a parallel between Solimena's *variazione di maniera* after the sacristy frescoes and Vico's renunciation of *argutezze*? And if there is a parallel, how to interpret it?

There has been some debate about the philosophical significance of Solimena's change of style. Bologna has argued that

> in the same way as the Cartesianism of the new metaphysicians consisted in the methodological extrapolation of the principles of reason, order and connection . . . so the principles of the basis of which Solimena tried to restrain baroque vitalism were the subordination of colour to a design capable of selecting and defining it . . . all in view of a result of clarity and ideal beauty.[58]

Bologna here identifies Cartesian clarity with Platonic ideal beauty, as opposed to "the unbiased experimental method of

the antimetaphysicians interested in science and economy." In contrast, Raffaello Ajello sees Cartesianism as being allied with scientific objectivity, and Solimena's turn as a response to Giordanesque decadence and the irrational mysticism promoted by the church against scientific skepticism.[59]

The problem with this now venerable scholarly exchange is that it operates on the premise that the intellectual debates are philosophical ones, merely reflected in the paintings. Yet there is no need to invent a theological equivalent to Giordano's *scuola ereticale*; the Neapolitan baroque already represented a response to Caravaggio's visual skepticism, and Solimena's attempts to temper its excesses in his own work did not require an alignment with Cartesianism so much as a step back in the direction of the Caravaggesque naturalism mediated by Preti. Solimena's insistence that the mastery of chiaroscuro depends on the direct observation of nature is not just an admission that the pleasing style he inherited from Giordano failed to convince viewers of its veracity; it is also a step back toward the autoptic world of Caravaggio, observing how the shadows fall in a cellar. On this interpretation, the *variazione* positioned Solimena between the atomism of the Neapolitan Caravaggisti and the *scuola ereticale* of Luca Giordano, or, as Bellori would have described it, between the icastic and the fantastic.

The middle way that Neapolitan painting eventually followed after Solimena's *variazione di maniera* accorded well with the Aristotelian preference for the mean evident in Vico's thought.[60] Vico paradoxically presents his own fall as the way he regains his balance to become one of those "men of ingenuity and depth, who thanks to the one, are quick as lightning in perception, and thanks to the other, take no pleasure in verbal cleverness or falsehood." It is this balance that eventually allows him to reject both Epicureanism and the baroque: *ingegno* provides him with the powers of invention

that allow him to move beyond materialism and crude empiricism; depth with a resistance to falsehoods that merely appear true, forms without shadow that have no substance.

The Sacristy of San Domenico Maggiore

If human truth is like painting, and painting has, as Vico claims, reached the summit of perfection, then human truth will presumably be true insofar as it is like one painted at that peak rather than one that is less perfect. In the Neapolitan context, this might be taken to imply that human truth is like a painting by Solimena—one painted after the *variazione di maniera*, but before Vico's reference to the "peak of perfection" in *Study Methods* (1709), and to "human truth" in *Ancient Wisdom* (1710).

Is there a particular painting that might have exemplified this perfection for Vico? The most obvious candidate is Solimena's fresco for the sacristy of San Domenico Maggiore, executed in 1704–6 (figure 3.7). The university had temporarily relocated to the convent in 1701, and the oration on which *Study Methods* was based was first delivered as the inaugural event of the academic year in 1708. According to De Dominici, Solimena's fresco "was adjudged by all the teachers of drawing and by those who understand or have good taste in painting one of the works perfect in all the aspects of art."[61]

Would this painting serve as a good example of what human truth is like? De Dominici's judgment that "never will a painting be painted with a more expressive and unified narrative . . . nor with more gracious figures, coloured with such a variety of beautiful and pleasing hues,"[62] is an indication that Solimena's fresco was seen as having united the potentially opposing qualities of expression and color. This is not a painting that sacrifices light and color for clarity of expression, but one that although painted with vivid colors, nevertheless expresses just what it wants to express.



3.7.
Francesco Solimena, *Triumph of the Dominican Order*, Sacristy of San Domenico Maggiore, Naples (Photo: Luciano Pedicini).

How has this been achieved? In the frescoes at San Paolo, the figures are in danger of becoming jumbled as the play of complementary colors threatens to dissolve any coherent sense of the spatial relationship between them (e.g., in the *Simon Magus* where the woman with the upraised arm looks to be in danger of cutting her hand on the blade of the ax of the *fasces* above; figure 3.4b). But at San Domenico, the figures are grouped in such a way that the primary contrasts are between the colors of the drapery of the principal figures in each group (e.g., the Virgin, Saint Peter Martyr, Saint Dominic, Divine Wisdom). In compositional terms this distinguishes the figures within each group and clarifies the spatial relationships between the groups themselves.

This is important because the iconography of the ceiling is complex (figure 3.7a). At the apex of the composition, the figures are the three members of the Trinity from whom incan-

3.4b.
Detail of 3.4.





3.7a.
Detail of 3.7.

descent light falls onto the Virgin, who stands below them, encircled by saints of the Dominican order (probably Thomas Aquinas, Caterina Ricci, Peter Martyr, Rosa di Lima, and Catherine of Siena). She points toward Saint Dominic, whom an angel is anointing with the star his godmother was said to have seen shining from his forehead at his baptism.

Ranged below Saint Dominic are a group of allegorical figures that recall those in the spandrels at San Paolo Maggiore. In

the center is Divine Wisdom (who also appears in the spandrels of San Paolo), a simplified version of the figure described by Cesare Ripa. A woman of beautiful and holy appearance, she has in her right hand a round shield with the emblem of the Holy Spirit, and with her left holds aloft the book of wisdom on which is seated the Paschal lamb (though the seven seals are omitted).[63]

At the lower left, a woman holds the long tresses of her hair in one hand, with her gaze fixed on the dove in the center of the shield. She, too, has a counterpart at San Paolo, where a putto directs the gaze of a similar penitential figure (derived from representations of Mary Magdalen) to the shield of Divine Wisdom seated beside her. On the ceiling of the sacristy in San Domenico, however, the iconography is more involved. The penitential soul is led by Obedience, the female figure above her steadying a yoke with her left hand, through Faith, who holds aloft a chalice that catches the light radiating down from Saint Dominic's star above, to the contemplation of Divine Wisdom.

The figure of Divine Wisdom is the only one on the ceiling to be located in its center, and the position is indicative of her importance to the meaning of the composition. Divine Wisdom is what is bestowed by the Godhead through the Dominican saints; at the same time, it is that to which the penitent may be drawn to learn, and from which heretics have excluded themselves. Between Divine Wisdom and the heretics is an angel brandishing a thunderbolt (figure 3.7b). His right leg is centrally aligned like that of Giordano's Vienna Saint Michael, and here, too, the angel's foot almost touches the body of the uppermost heretic. The effect is to concentrate all the divine energy that has been zapping from side to side in the upper part of the composition into a single vertical line. But whereas in Giordano's *Saint Michael* the toe-touch is the one point of contact between two incompatible worlds—



3.7b.
Detail of 3.7.

Reni's angelic and Ribera's demonic—Solimena's heretics are painted no differently than the angel himself.

Large-scale ceiling paintings that simultaneously celebrated the triumph of a religious order and the overthrow of the enemies of God were an established feature of baroque iconography in Rome. The most spectacular example is Gaulli's *Triumph of the Holy Name* at the Gesù, but here the heretics are falling beyond the frame of the painting, struck by a shaft of divine light that breaks through the circle of figures adoring the name of Jesus. The division is still more absolute at Santi Apostoli, where Gaulli's *Apotheosis of the Franciscan Order* (1707) above the nave is complemented by Odazzi's *Fall of the Rebel Angels* (1709) over the choir. This is very close to Solimena's sacristy in both date and composition. But whereas the upward movement of Gaulli's *Apotheosis* contrasts with Odazzi's tumble of the damned, in Solimena's fresco the downward movement is

continuous from the Holy Spirit at the apex of the composition to the hand of the falling heretic at the base.

Solimena's painting creates a unified space that extends from the Trinity in the highest heaven to the flaking plaster above the brickwork of the parapet from which the heretics fall. There is no visible discontinuity in space, style, or lighting. The shadows lengthen toward the base of the composition, but this is a single pictorial universe in which the *fantasia* required to depict divine beings and the *autopsia* needed to observe the flaking plaster are not opposed to one another. The divine wisdom transmitted from above eventually becomes the thunderbolt in the hands of the angel.

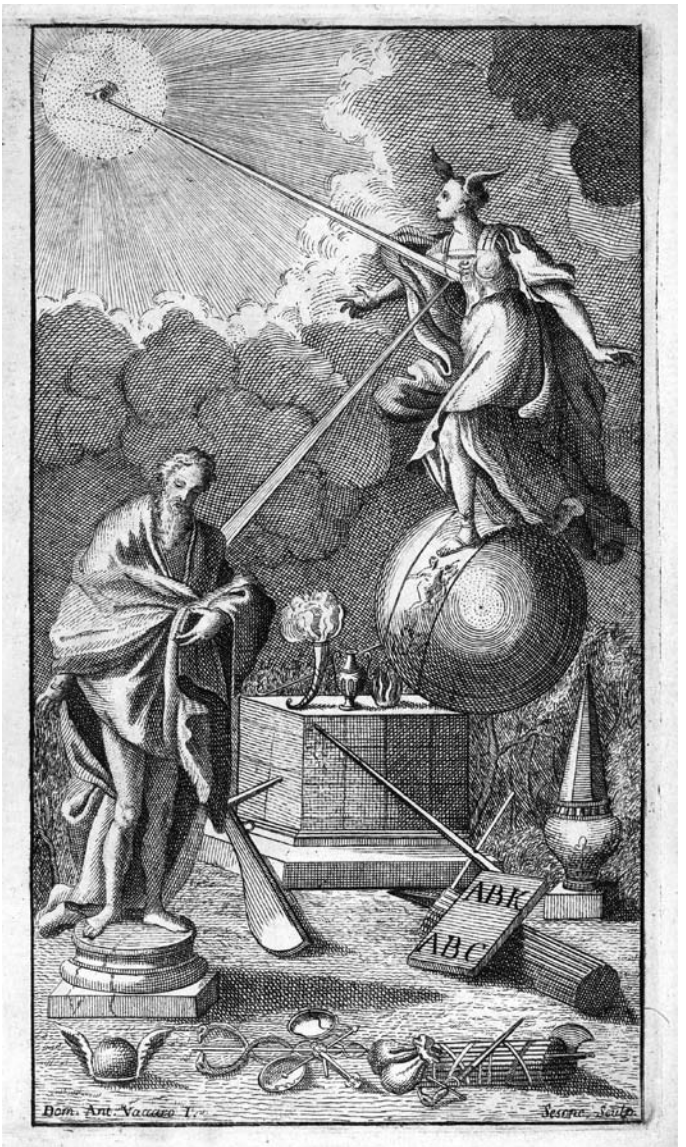
There is perhaps a local iconographical justification for this. As the dog holding a torch in its mouth indicates, the historic mission of the Dominicans (the *domini canes*) was the investigation and suppression of the hydra of heresy, and the torch served both as a source of illumination and the tool used to cauterize the stumps of the hydra's heads before they grew again. Similarly, although the heretics at the base of the painting cannot see the saints above, but only the avenging angel and the figure of Divine Wisdom, they may nevertheless grasp the wisdom in their punishment. Most fall backward, but there is one, his left arm raised above his head, who appears simultaneously to be shielding himself from the thunderbolt and acknowledging Divine Wisdom above, while he tries to push away the coils of the hydra's tail with his other hand. This is an ambiguous posture, akin to that of the woman with the raised arm in the *Fall of Simon Magus*, a reminder that truth sometimes reaches men as the thunderbolt in the hand of the angel (or the torch in the mouth of the Dominican dog). Like Jupiter's thunderbolt and the divine light that throws Saul from his horse, this is a punishment that is also a form of revelation.

FOUR
Theological Painting

The *Dipintura*

As befitted someone who compared himself to a painter and claimed that human truth was like a painting, Vico took the opportunity to give visual expression to the theoretical ambitions of the *New Science*. For the second edition, he composed what he called *la dipintura* (figure 4.1). It was designed by Domenico Antonio Vaccaro and appeared as a frontispiece in the third edition as well.

Vico explains the ungainly composition as follows.[1] The luminous triangle with the seeing eye represents God with the aspect of his divine providence. The woman with winged temples standing on a celestial globe is Metaphysic, and the globe itself the world of nature. The ray of divine providence illuminates a convex jewel on the breast of Metaphysic. The jewel indicates that Metaphysic must have a pure heart uncorrupted by the pride of Zeno or the pleasure of Epicurus; it is convex because it scatters the ray of divine providence in all



4.1.
Domenico Antonio Vaccaro, frontispiece to Giambattista Vico, *Scienza Nuova*, 1730 and 1744 editions (© The British Library Board).

directions. However, in this image, the ray is shown reflected onto a statue of Homer, who here stands for the Gentile poets whose limitless *fantasia* generated the first poetic wisdom.

As Vico describes it, the deep shadows in the background represent the obscure antiquities of the Gentile nations, while the various hieroglyphs, which are illuminated by the light of the ray of divine providence reflected by Metaphysic upon Homer reveal the founding principles of these nations. The most prominent of these is the altar on which the celestial globe is balanced. This represents religion, upon which the civil world is founded. Resting on the altar are the *lituus*, a staff for divination; water (in a jar) and fire, which denote sacrifice; and a torch, which symbolizes marriage.

Other primitive human institutions are indicated by the objects on the ground. The cinerary urn stands for burial, to indicate belief in the afterlife and the division of fields. The plow shows that the founders of the nations were strong men; the rudder stands for migration through navigation, and the tablet for the advent of language. In the foreground can be seen the fasces, the sign of civil empire formed from the union of the founding fathers; the sword indicates force, the purse, commerce; the balance signifies the egalitarianism of popular governments, and the caduceus peace.

Looking at the *dipintura* in the context of Neapolitan painting, what is most striking is not the iconographical detail but its larger structural similarity to Solimena's ceiling in the sacristy of San Domenico Maggiore (see figure 3.7a). There, divine light passes through a series of diagonal movements down from the Trinity, to the Madonna, to Saint Dominic, to Faith. In Vico's *dipintura*, the corresponding sequence goes from the Trinitarian image of divine providence to the female figure of Metaphysic, to Homer, to the various practices and institutions indicated below. In the former case, divine wis-



4.2.
Impresa on the title page of the 1744 edition of Vico's *Scienza Nuova* (© The British Library Board).

dom is revealed in the Christian faith; in the latter, divine providence is revealed through pagan theology and institutions. Nevertheless, there is more than parallelism here. There is a sense in which they are representations of the same thing. Vico equates divine wisdom with divine providence and suggests that it is divine wisdom that has "ordained this world of nations."[2] Providence is the form that divine wisdom takes within the world of men. It is what allows human truth to approximate to the divine.

The *impresa* that appears on the title page of the third edition (figure 4.2) gives a further indication of the way Vico wanted the frontispiece to be understood. It shows a woman

with wings on her head, seated on a globe and leaning on an altar inscribed with the words *ignota latebat* (unknown she lies hidden). In her right hand she holds a triangle and in the left a mirror. The conjunction of these symbols makes clear that the figure is derived from the second of the two figures for Scienza, which appear in the 1625 edition of Ripa's *Iconologia* (figure 4.3). The chief difference between the figures is that Ripa's holds a ball, whereas Vico's sits on a globe; however, the transition was an easy one to make, for according to Ripa, "the ball demonstrates that knowledge, being true opinion, does not have contrariety of opinion, just as the globe does not have contrary motion."[3]

According to Ripa, the woman has wings because knowledge always involves the mind raising itself to the contemplation of things; the triangle shows that just as the three sides make a single figure, so three terms in the proposition constitute proof and thus knowledge, and the mirror is a reminder



4.3.
"Scienza" from Cesare Ripa, *Della novissima iconologia*, Padua, 1625 (© The British Library Board).

that it is through looking in the mirror of existence that one grasps things in their essence. These similarities are enough to identify the figure on the title page as Scienza, with her attributes slightly rearranged, and to establish that she is the subject of the inscription *ignota latebat*. The reader is clearly meant to understand that Vico's *Scienza Nuova* will ensure that Scienza need not remain unknown forever.

Absent from the depiction on the title page (as from the depiction in Ripa) is "the ray or splendor that comes from heaven," described in Ripa's *Iconologia*. This signifies that however hard man tries to acquire wisdom, he will not be successful without divine aid. The frontispiece itself, which predates the *impresa* and draws more freely on Ripa's figure to create that of Metaphysic, shows that ray emanating from the divine triangle in heaven and bouncing off the convex jewel on the breast of Metaphysic to illuminate the figure of Homer below. From this, it may be inferred that knowledge is lying hidden on the title page, not just because the reader has yet to be illuminated by reading the book but because no knowledge is possible without "the ray of divine providence" operating in the manner illustrated in the frontispiece.[4]

The key element in all of this is the idea that divine providence works directly through the primitive institutions of the pagan world, and in the introduction to the 1730 edition of the *New Science* (in a section omitted from the third edition and therefore rarely discussed), Vico contrasts the frontispiece with its hypothetical contrary, where knowledge is absent because divine providence is prevented from playing any role. Here the triangle alone is the same; false Metaphysic has her wings fixed to the dark side of the globe, and will not raise herself above the world of nature, which is ruled by fate or chance as taught by the Stoics and Epicurus (and their modern followers Locke and Spinoza). With her left hand

Metaphysic holds the purse (indicating malcontents teaching false doctrines), and with her right the balance on which the sword of force outweighs the caduceus of peace. The altar lies ruined, the *lituus* broken, the jar overturned, the torch extinguished, and the fasces dispersed. The statue of Homer and the inscribed tablet have been thrown to the ground; the urn is inscribed *Lemurum Fabula* (because the afterlife has been reduced to a fairy tale); the point of the plow has been broken off, and the rudder returned to the woods (because mankind has returned to a primitive state).[5]

For Vico, it was axiomatic that "Whenever a people has grown savage in arms so that human laws have no longer any place among it, the only powerful means of reducing it is religion."[6] What the alternative frontispiece shows, in far more explicit terms than the allegorical figure in the *impresa*, is the condition of man in a world unilluminated by the steady, diffused light of divine providence, where the absence of religion leaves savagery uncontrolled. It is an allegorical representation of the world of Hobbes's "fierce and violent men," for according to Vico, it was above all Hobbes who failed to see that "without religion no commonwealths can be born" and so "fell into error with the 'chance' of his Epicurus."[7]

The Fall

If Hobbes discounted the role of divine providence, Plato's ideal republic, which took no account of the Fall of man, represented the other pole. Vico complained that Plato had "raised the barbaric and rough origins of gentile humanity to the perfect state of his own exalted, divine and recondite knowledge, whereas he ought, on the contrary, to have descended from his 'ideas' and sunk down to those origins."[8] In his *Autobiography*, Vico presents himself as having rectified Plato's omission: he had described "the ideal republic that

Plato should have contemplated as a consequence of his metaphysic; but he was shut off from it by his ignorance of the fall of the first man."[9] Vico had always maintained that "our own corrupted nature . . . points out to us those studies which we must cultivate . . . [and] the order and path by which we shall approach them."[10] And in the *New Science* he applied the principle not just to the student curriculum but to the education of humanity as a whole, explaining that "God has so ordained and disposed human institutions that men, having fallen from complete justice by original sin . . . have been led . . . to live like men in justice and keep themselves in society." The conduct of divine providence in this matter was, as he puts its, "the chief business of our Science."[11]

Vico's acceptance of the Christian doctrine of the Fall is also what allows him to use painting as a model. It was because of "the fall of the first parent Adam [that] the human race was led from the contemplation of the permanent truth with pure mind to the admiration of the transient out of the fallacious judgement of the senses."[12] And it was in consequence of the Fall that "the certain" had become the substitute of the true.[13] Painting deals with the problem of how to make truth from the certainties of direct observation. If, like Caravaggio, it does not move beyond the certain, it will remain trapped within a fallen world, like that illustrated in the alternative frontispiece—the world of Hobbes's "fierce and violent men." But if, like the mannerist painters and Plato himself, it does not descend from the realm of ideas to look at nature, it will distort common sense, creating specters instead of shapes.

It is because of the Fall that people are ugly and Zeuxis's methods are necessary. As Bellori states, whereas celestial bodies remain forever beautiful, sublunar bodies "are subject to change and ugliness."[14] However, if painting proceeds from

the observation of nature to the ideal, the consequences of the Fall can be overcome, and the ideal can take shape using fallen humanity as models. By demonstrating that beauty may eventually be constructed out of ugliness, painting confirms that it is possible to build an ideal republic from within a fallen world after all.

However, Vico is clear about the limitations of what can be achieved. Just as painting is always trapped in two dimensions, so human truth "comprehends the outside elements only." Similarly, as Vico makes clear in the *New Science*, "there is . . . an essential difference between our Christian religion, which is true, and all the others, which are false."[15] So in what way can truth be found in the myths and false religions discussed in the *New Science*? The answer, according to Vico's account, is that truth in false religion functions in the same way as truth in painting. Like an ideal painting, it is true not despite but because of its falsehood. Thanks to divine providence, truth can be made in a fallen world, but it will always be made of falsehoods, just as painting may depict what is real without ever becoming three-dimensional itself.

Time

The potential importance of painting for Vico is that it provides a model for human progress outside of salvation history. It shows how humanity might ascend the flight of steps and reach the peak of perfection, aided by divine providence but without the benefit of divine truth. In the process it demonstrates that unlike divine truth, which is eternal, human truth, which has been "sifted from falsehood in everything that has been preserved for us through long centuries," emerges in a historical process achieved within time.[16]

In the first edition of the *New Science*, Vico suggests that the originality of his work lies in starting from the very origins

of humanity and from there establishing a "certain acme or state of perfection through which the humanity of nations must proceed." Other scholars have failed to do this, and so, he claims, lack a scientific understanding of "the practices through which the humanity of a nation, as it rises, can reach this perfect state, and those through which, when it declines from this state, it can return to it anew."[17]

On this basis Vico posits a historical pattern of *corso* and *ricorso*, in which the developments in one historical period are repeated in the same sequence when they return. His primary example of *ricorso* is the return of barbarism in the European Middle Ages, and he uses early medieval painting as evidence of the larger pattern of human development he describes, citing the "very big faces" with which God, Christ, and the Virgin are depicted "during the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries" as exemplifying a return to barbarian times in which, as in childhood, fantasy imagined things to be larger than they really are.[18]

The example is a revealing one, for there was already one discipline in which historians claimed to have observed the dynamics of such cycles. In the preface to the *Lives*, Vasari started by describing how in antiquity "from the smallest beginnings art attained the greatest heights, only to decline from its noble position to the most degraded status," in order that artists "will be able to understand more readily the process by which art has been reborn and reached perfection in our own times."[19] Bellori, writing a century later, suggested that the cycle of rebirth described by Vasari had already come to an end, "because things below on earth never maintain one same state, and those that have reached the heights must perforce revert again to falling, in perpetual alternation." Painting, which "from Cimabue and Giotto had advanced gradually over the long course (*corso*) of two hundred and fifty years,"

had declined and become nearly extinct before its revival by Annibale Carracci.[20]

In painting, there had in fact been three cycles: those of antiquity, the Renaissance, and finally the baroque, the last of which (in De Dominici's account) extends to the time of Solimena. Vico claims that painting had attained the peak of perfection, so he must be referring to the last of these, when painting reached the summit of perfection in his own city of Naples. Often presented by later art historians as merely a decadent postscript to the Roman baroque, Neapolitan painting was not viewed in this light at the time. Francesco Solimena, the "glory and splendour of our century," was the most sought-after painter in Europe, and Neapolitan painters could with some justification think of themselves as representing the culmination of the entire history of art since the Carracci.[21]

An allegorical painting by Paolo de Matteis, quite possibly one of the series of paintings about painting commissioned by the Marchese del Carpio, the future viceroy of Naples while he was the Spanish ambassador in Rome (pre-1682), illustrates the currency of such opinions (figure 4.4). Recently identified as the *Triumph of Neapolitan Painting*, it shows the siren Parthenope, identifiable by the scales just visible on the lower part of her body, painting a picture of Time Uncovering Truth, and being crowned with laurels at the behest of Scienza, seated between allegorical figures of Painting and Architecture (with putti displaying the attributes of drama and sculpture).[22]

Parthenope, a siren who drowned herself and was washed up on the shores of Naples, represents the city, as she also does in De Matteis's *Allegory of Naples*, so the painting can only mean that Neapolitan painters have, over time, revealed truth, and that this achievement should be recognized as a contribution to knowledge. If human truth is like a painting, Vico must



4.4.
Paolo de Matteis, *Triumph of Neapolitan Painting*
(Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston).

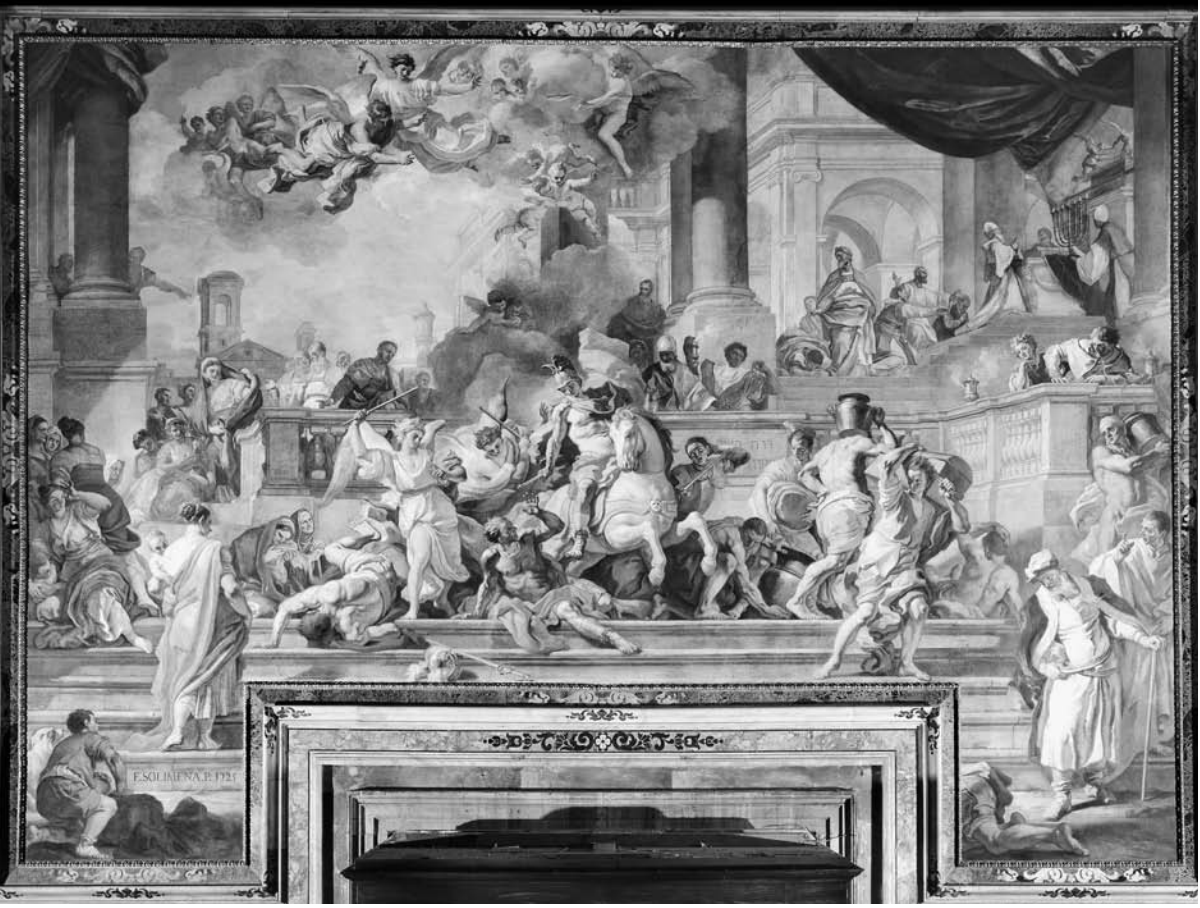
mean (what else could he mean, having lived in Naples all his life?) that human truth is like a Neapolitan painting. De Matteis's painting depicts the other side of this analogy: Neapolitan painting revealing what truth is like.

Theologies of Painting

What De Matteis depicts Neapolitan painting as doing—revealing truth through time—is what Vico thinks early man did too. In the *dipintura*, Homer, said by Petrarch and Dolce to have been the "first painter," stands in a similar relation to Metaphysic as De Matteis's Parthenope does to Scienza. Does the analogy suggest something that might otherwise be missed about the achievements of late baroque painting in Naples?

Vico refers to early peoples as "theological poets." Can the Neapolitan painters collectively be considered theologians too? Vico's account of primitive creativity provides an unambiguous answer. The theological poets were like painters of ideas because they worked through fantasy, and created something new, just as the divine creator does.[23] In this sense, the entire development of Neapolitan painting since its rejection of the icastic painting of Caravaggio in favor of the ideal is an example of theological painting—a theology within which Caravaggio fulfills the role of Antichrist.

According to Vico, the first fable of the theological poets was characterized by being impossible, marvelous, sublime, and yet at the same time believable, troubling, and improving.[24] It is a duality implied by the creation of any ideal form if, as Vico suggests, the physical truth is used to create a metaphysical truth relative to which the physically true must appear false. Just as the idea of Jupiter, created in the giants' own image, passed judgment on the giants themselves, the ideal always passes judgment on the real. The beauty of Helen was created by excluding from one perfect body the imperfect



4.5.
Francesco Solimena, *Expulsion of Heliodorus*,
Gesù Nuovo, Naples (Photo: Luciano Pedicini).

body parts of all the models. The steps that lead to the idea and the bodies falling from them are necessarily part of the same fantasy.

Establishing an ideal by exclusion from it is a double movement that operates in many Neapolitan contexts, and in a city said to be a "paradise inhabited by devils,"[25] imagining perfection was often a form of exorcism. Solimena's fresco of the *Expulsion of Heliodorus from the Temple*, on the *controfacciata* of the Gesù Nuovo (figure 4.5), completed in 1725, the year in which Vico published the first edition of the *New Science*, is

only the most famous example. West walls were traditionally the place for scenes of the Last Judgment, but in Naples, following Lanfranco's *Pool of Bethesda*, they become ideal architectural spaces, often the temple of Jerusalem, approached by a flight of steps. In both Giordano's *Christ Driving the Money Changers from the Temple* at the Girolamini (see figure 1.5) and Solimena's *Expulsion*, the ideality of this fictive space is established through an act of divine judgment in which impious intruders are expelled from it—in Solimena's case by an angel of the Lord mounted on a white horse miraculously appearing to drive out Heliodorus, who has come to the temple to despoil it of its treasures (figure 4.5a). Unlike Raphael's famous depiction of the same subject, Solimena's fresco is not a virtuoso exercise in perspective. Positioned on the back wall of the church, the fresco exploits the vertical axis to present an idealized fantasy of the holy sanctuary the viewer is leaving, and simultaneously to threaten divine punishment on all who would profane it.



4.5a.
Detail of 4.5.

Looking at Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, which shows the artist in the act of painting, Luca Giordano is reported to have said that here was "the theology of painting."[26] It is difficult to know exactly what he meant. But he clearly refers not to the painting of theology but to an act of self-conscious reflection on the art of making pictures. Are Neapolitan painters also theologians in Giordano's sense, and, if so, what are the doctrines of their theology?

The final volume of De Dominici's *Lives* ends with a sonnet that Solimena addressed to the Virgin Mary, whose image he had depicted, seeking from her son *un vero pentimento* (a "true repentance" but also potentially a "correction" to the painting).[27] The pun implicitly acknowledges the existence of images like Domenico Antonio Vaccaro's *Christ Painting the Virgin* (figure 4.6), which shows Christ seated on a cloud painting the Virgin on a veil held by God the Father while Saint Michael chases away the rebel angels in the background. The unusual iconography comes from the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico, in which the miraculous nature of the image is represented by showing one of the Trinity, usually God the Father, painting it in person.[28] But when this imagery is transposed to the Neapolitan context where, as Vico claims, "God is the master artist of nature; the mind, we may say, is the god of the arts," it is difficult not to take it as a knowing reference to the function of painting itself.[29]

In which case, what is the difference between Parthenope's painting and Christ's? One shows truth revealed by time, the other an eternal truth. The former shows what human truth looks like, the latter (notwithstanding the fact that Christ is here a painter rather than a sculptor) shows a divine truth. Within Neapolitan painting, these are iconographically remote images produced half a century apart, but seeing them through the eyes of Vico suggests that both convey something



4.6.
Domenico Antonio Vaccaro, *Christ Painting the Virgin*, private collection (Photo: Blindarte, Naples).



4.7.
Paolo de Matteis, *Allegory of the Peace of Utrecht and the Peace of Rastatt* (Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston).

of the self-consciousness of the Neapolitan artist in this period: one the sense of the historical development and progress of painting in Naples; the other the awareness of the parallels between the artist as divine creator and the divine creator as artist.

Vico himself picks up on both points and combines them with a third aspect of the self-consciousness of the Neapolitan artist—the acknowledgment that the artist is nevertheless also the maker of falsehoods, fictions of his own devis-

ing. Paolo de Matteis's *Allegory of the Peace of Utrecht and the Peace of Rastatt* (figure 4.7) reflects this awareness too. The painting celebrates the treaty of 1714 in which, seven years after the fact, the Spanish ceded sovereignty of the kingdom of Sicily (which included Naples) to Austria. At one level it is a complex allegory of a conventional kind. The figures of Austria (with the double-headed eagle) and Spain (with the lion) reach an agreement, presided over by the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, with the figures of Peace and Plenty in attendance; to either side bellicose figures are driven from the scene, while to the right the lion, the lamb, the wolf, and the leopard lie down in harmony. In the background, beyond the Bay of Naples, Vesuvius erupts.

The surprising element is provided by the artist, who depicts himself in the act of painting the central scene as a *quadro riportato*, with a monkey tugging at his clothing. This aroused the disapproval of De Dominici, who complained that De Matteis "many times introduced into heroic subjects concepts that were base," as in this case where "after he had painted many figures alluding to the noble and pleasing subject . . . he situated his own figure to sit in the middle of the picture with the tripod in front of him in the act of painting, but with a cap on his head and bedroom clothes—a concept certainly base, and for which he was criticised by all when the painting was exhibited."[30]

The interpretation of this conceit is left open, but one reading might be this: De Matteis showed his painting at the Monte dei Poveri Vergognosi, just as Giordano had done with his Messina paintings in 1678, so inviting a direct comparison between the two artists. Giordano had also painted *Rubens Painting the Allegory of Peace* (Museo del Prado, Madrid), in which the artist is shown working on his allegory of peace with all the models posed in front of him. However, unlike

Giordano, De Matteis does not show the models for the allegorical figures of Austria and Spain. They are clearly the products of his *fantasia*, which may be why the monkey (Art the Ape of Nature, rather than, as De Dominici suggests, an admission that De Matteis looked like a monkey himself) is trying to direct his attention to the brutally realistic contemporary scene (complete with a discarded pistol) behind him to the left. Juxtaposed with the parallel allegory on the right, it allows the viewer to infer that the ideal excludes the real just as peace excludes war.

De Matteis is clearly making a point about his relationship to the traditions of allegorical painting. By showing that he has simply made up the figures of Austria and Spain, he reminds the viewer that the other allegorical figures have been made up in just the same way, by this curious-looking man working in his cap and informal clothes. At one level it is a positive statement about the power of painting to make things appear real; but at the same time, it undermines the deception by showing us exactly how it is done. Put in Vico's terms, it shows us just how imaginative universals (like Austria or Spain, or the other allegorical figures) are actually made. It is an unexpected reminder that though the ideal may pass judgment on the real, it is also contingent upon it.

This painting, De Matteis's earlier *Triumph of Neapolitan Painting*, and Vaccaro's *Christ Painting the Virgin* represent three theologies of painting composed in his lifetime by artists Vico knew. What do they show? That the painter is like the divine artist, that painting reveals truth over time, and that painters make things up. According to Vico, images and metaphors precede arguments.[31] What Neapolitan painters are here claiming for themselves as makers of painting is what Vico asserts about human beings as makers of truth.

Epilogue

Exploring Vico's analogy of painting offers a perspective on his work from within the visual world of the Neapolitan baroque and vice versa. Beyond that, it may suggest something unexpected about the way in which philosophy and painting are related. Within art historical scholarship, it has long been commonplace to assume, sometimes on the basis of quite limited evidence, the influence of trends in philosophy upon contemporary developments in painting. From the influence of Neoplatonism upon the Florentine Renaissance to that of Bergson on the cubists, such interaction is always assumed to go in one direction, as though artists were hyperreceptive to every snatch of philosophical conversation they might overhear, but philosophers blind to the potential significance of any artwork they might see.

In this case, however, the influence goes the other way. If painting in Naples served not as an illustration of philosophical arguments but rather as the model for them, then perhaps it, too, should be considered a form of epistemological

investigation. And if what subsequent philosophers learned, directly or indirectly, from Vico is what he learned from paintings, then perhaps those paintings themselves deserve a place within the history of philosophy. In which case, rather than being an art historical dead end, the Neapolitan baroque turns out to have been the site of a significant artistic and intellectual exchange, perhaps one of the passages through which modern consciousness was formed.

Vico's idea of making truth could easily be turned against itself, for how is made truth to be differentiated from invented falsehood? Leopardi, for example, progressed rapidly from accepting that "the primitive essence of poetry was to be inspired by falsehoods" to asking "is not truth no less than falsehood vain?"[1] And this was also Nietzsche's move. From the assumption that "we can comprehend only a world that we ourselves have made," Nietzsche deduces that we have invented the world precisely so that we can comprehend it. Error is the precondition of thought, for "we have need of lies . . . in order to live."[2] Did Nietzsche read Vico too? The question has often been asked, and though there is no proof, there is a bit more evidence than is often supposed.

Around 1870 Nietzsche was reading Jules Michelet's *Bible de l'humanite*,[3] which described how the tombs of the Etruscans and ancient Italians "speak to man of man, showing us the course of time, the great ages of the world, the regular return of things," and cited Vico, "above all Vico," on the topic.[4] If Nietzsche followed up the reference, either in Michelet's French translation of Vico's *Ancient Wisdom*, *New Science*, and other works published in 1827, or W. E. Weber's German edition of the *New Science* published in 1822,[5] it would explain why in "On Truth and Lies" (1873), it often sounds as though Vico himself is speaking.

Vico claimed that "'Logic' comes from *logos*, whose first and proper meaning was *fabula*, fable," and that "every metaphor . . . is a fable in brief."[6] Nietzsche argues that "Even the concept [of logic] . . . is merely the residue of a metaphor." To illustrate the point, he points out that "Just as the Romans and the Etruscans cut up the heavens with rigid mathematical lines and confined a god within each of the spaces thereby delimited, as within a *templum*, so every people has a similarly mathematically divided conceptual heaven above themselves," which then becomes the basis for specialized knowledge, in which "truth demands that each conceptual god be sought only with his own sphere."[7]

The example is an odd one, and its most obvious source is Vico himself, who described how "poetic metaphysics was . . . divided into all its subordinate sciences" with reference to the way that

> in their science of augury the Romans used the verb *contemplari* for observing the parts of the sky whence the auguries came or the auspices were taken. These regions marked out by the augurs with their wands, were called temples of the sky (*templa coeli*), whence must have come to the Greeks their first *theoremata* and *mathemata* things divine or sublime to contemplate, which eventuated in metaphysical and mathematical abstractions.[8]

All of these, according to Vico, show that "in the fables the nations have in a rough way and in the language of the human senses described the beginning of this world of sciences, which the specialized studies of scholars have since clarified for us by reasoning and generalization."[9]

If Nietzsche is following Vico here, then his answer to the question, "What is truth?" would appear to be not just the

same as Vico's, but directly inspired by it. In Nietzsche's opinion, truth is

> a movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to people to be fixed, canonical and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions—they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force.

According to Nietzsche, "the drive toward the formation of metaphors is the fundamental human drive," and

> only by forgetting this primitive world of metaphor can one live with any repose, security and consistency: only by means of the petrifaction and coagulation of a mass of images which originally streamed from the primal faculty of the human imagination like a fiery liquid . . . in short, only by forgetting that he himself is an artistically creating subject, does man live with any repose.[10]

What for Vico had been a reassuring conclusion that demonstrated that truth could be made even in the unpromising conditions that existed after the Fall becomes for Nietzsche proof that humanity is like someone who "succeeds in piling an infinitely complicated dome of concepts upon an unstable foundation."[11]

In 1876 Nietzsche arrived in Naples for the first time, and spent the next six months in Sorrento. Now he had the opportunity to see Vico's city for himself. He says little about it in his letters, but it obviously had some impact, for the fourth book of the *Gay Science* is entitled "Sanctus Januarius" after San Gennaro, whose blood can be seen miraculously liquefied

in the cathedral to this day.[12] We do not know if Nietzsche crossed from the cathedral to the other side of the road to visit Vico's Girolamini, or if he made it to the sacristy of San Paolo Maggiore, though it is tempting to see echoes of Solimena's painting in Nietzsche's discussion of the conversion of Paul in *Daybreak*, and of his Simon Magus in the tightrope walker in the prologue to *Zarathustra* who, distracted by the buffoon, falls headlong to the ground in a crowded square.[13]

In any case, when Nietzsche later pressed home his observations about truth and lies, he did so with reference to art as the place where "the *lie* is sanctified and the *will to deceive* has good conscience on its side,"[14] and to painting in particular:

> What forces us at all to suppose that there is an essential opposition of "true" and "false"? Is it not sufficient to assume degrees of apparentness and, as it were, lighter and darker shadows and shades of appearance—different "values" to use the language of painters? Why couldn't the world *that concerns us*—be a fiction?[15]

On this basis, Nietzsche sets out to undermine the very distinction between truth and falsehood by developing the contrast between them to the advantage of the latter: "the will to appearance, to illusion, to deception . . . [is] more profound, primeval, 'metaphysical' than the will to truth";[16] compared with truth, "falsity seems so profound so omnisided."[17]

From Nietzsche's perspective, "the faith in one normal god beside whom there are only pseudo-gods" is "the greatest danger that has yet confronted humanity."[18] The Mosaic distinction must be dissolved, for "the lie—and not the truth—is divine."[19]

Notes

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used for the most frequently cited translations of Vico's works:

A *The Autobiography of Giambattista Vico*, trans. T. G. Bergin and M. H. Fisch, Ithaca, NY, 1944.

AR *The Art of Rhetoric*, trans. G. A. Pinton and A. W. Shippee, Amsterdam, 1996.

AW *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*, trans. L. M. Palmer, Ithaca, NY, 1988.

C *Commento all' "Arte poetica di Orazio,"* trans. G. de Paulis, Naples, 1998.

HE *On Humanistic Education*, trans. G. A. Pinton and A. W. Shippee, Ithaca, NY, 1993.

1st NS *The First New Science*, trans. L. Pompa, Cambridge, 2002 (1725 edition references are to section numbers).

NS *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. T. G. Bergin and M. H. Fisch, Ithaca, NY, 1984 (1744 edition references are to section numbers).

SM *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, trans. E. Gianturco, Ithaca, NY, 1965.

UR *Universal Right*, trans. G. Pinton and M. Diehl, Amsterdam, 2000.

VV "The *Vici Vindiciae*," trans. D. P. Verene, in T. A. Bayer and D. P. Verene, eds., *Giambattista Vico: Keys to the "New Science"; Translations, Commentaries and Essays*, Ithaca, NY, 2009, 107–35.

Prologue

1. E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion* (Oxford, 1960), 29.

2. J. Assmann, *The Price of Monotheism* (Stanford, 2010), 64.

3. C. Davis-Weyer, *Early Medieval Art, 300–1150: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1971), 100.

4. M. Bull, *The Mirror of the Gods* (London, 2005), 387–95. See also T. J. Clark, "Looking at the Ceiling," *London Review of Books*, September 28, 2005, 7–9.

5. D. Bartoli, *La povertà contenta* (Venice, 1658), 255.

6. Of particular relevance to the larger themes of this essay are H. Vaihinger, *The Philosophy of "As If,"* trans. C. K. Ogden (London, 1935); M. Roskill and D. Carrier, *Truth and Falsehood in Visual Images* (Amherst, 1983); Louis Marin, *To Destroy Painting*, trans. M. Hjort (Chicago, 1995); C. Scarpati and E. Bellini, *Il vero e il falso dei poeti* (Milan, 1990); and several essays by Carlo Ginzburg, notably "Myth," in *Wooden Eyes*, trans. M. Ryle and K. Soper (London, 2002), 25–61, and "Montrer et citer: La vérité de l'histoire," *Le Débat* 56 (Sept.–Oct. 1989): 43–54.

ONE: *Vico*

1. On Vico's life and autobiography, see D. P. Verene, *The New Art of Autobiography* (Oxford, 1991); on the intellectual context, see H. Stone, *Vico's Cultural History: The Production and Transmission of Ideas in Naples, 1685–1750* (Leiden, 1997), and J. Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples, 1680–1760* (Cambridge, 2005).

2. Relevant recent studies of Vico's thought include D. P. Verene, *Vico's Science of Imagination* (Ithaca, NY, 1981); M. Lilla, *G. B. Vico: The Making of an Anti-Modern* (Cambridge, MA, 1991); G. Mazzotta, *The New Map of the World: The Poetic Philosophy of Giambattista Vico* (Princeton, 1999), and R. C. Miner, *Vico, Genealogist of Modernity* (Notre Dame, 2002).

3. G. B. Vico, *La congiura dei principi napoletani, 1701*, ed. C. Pandolfi (Naples, 1992), 235.

4. Cf. Bernardo De Dominici, *Vite de' pittori, scultori ed architetti napoletani*, ed. F. Sricchia Santoro and A. Zezza (Naples, 2003–8), 3:1018, on Paolo de Matteis. Vols. 1 and 2 of this three-volume work are bound together and paginated continuously.

5. G. B. Vico, *Opere*, vol. 7, ed. F. Nicolini (Bari, 1940), 76.

6. *C*, 86.

7. *AR*, 181 and 283.

8. *1st NS*, § 328.

9. G. Vico, *Autobiografia, seguita da una scelta di lettere*, ed. M. Fubini (Turin, 1960), 151.

10. For example, Cicero, *De optimo*, 2:6; *De oratore*, 3:57; see also C. Goldstein, "Rhetoric and Art History in the Italian Renaissance and Baroque," *Art Bulletin* 73 (1991): 641–52.

11. *AR*, 23.

12. *SM*, 12.

13. *SM*, 40.

14. *HE*, 46.

15. L. Dolce, "Dialogo della pittura," in *Trattati d'arte del cinquecento*, ed. P. Barocchi (Bari, 1960), 1:155.

16. *UR*, 3.

17. Pliny, *Natural History*, 35.36.84; Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, trans. J. R. Spencer (New Haven, 1956), 97.

18. *SM*, 14 and 19.

19. *NS*, § 357.

20. C. Celano, *Notizie del bello, dell' antico e del curioso della città di Napoli* (Naples, 1870), 2:313.

21. De Dominici, *Vite*, 3:769.

22. See G. A. Pinton, "La Nápoles de Vico," *Cuadernos sobre Vico* 7/8 (1997): 115–37.

23. *A*, 208.

24. Celano, *Notizie*, 3:104–5 (1870 ed.).

25. See F. Lomonaco, "Contributo all'iconografia vichiana," *Bollettino del Centro di Studi Vichiani* 19 (1989): 38–43; the attribution to the original portrait to Solimena is first attested by the Marchese di Villarosa (*Opuscoli di Giovanni Battista Vico*, ed. C. de Rosa [Naples, 1819],

3:v), who commissioned the copy for the Academy of Arcadia, now in the Museo di Roma.

26. T. Willette, "The Second Edition of Bellori's *Lives*" in J. Bell and T. Willette, eds., *Art History in the Age of Bellori* (Cambridge, 2002), 278–91; De Dominici, *Vite*, 1&2:26 and 1&2:428.

27. A. Cirillo, *Napoli ai tempi di Giambattista Vico* (Naples, 2000), 200–201, and Stone, *Vico's Cultural History*, 2–3.

28. *A*, 178.

29. *UR*, xxxii.

30. G. B. Vico, *Opere*, ed. A. Battistini (Milan, 1990), 1:248.

31. Celano, *Notizie*, 3:433–34. Reni's evangelists had played a role in Andrea Vaccaro's conversion from Caravaggism; see De Dominici, *Vite*, 3:263.

32. F. Nicolini, *Giambattista Vico nella vita domestica* (Naples, 1927), 64–69.

33. G. Labrot, ed., *Collections of Paintings in Naples, 1600–1780* (Munich, 1992), 310.

34. G. Vasari, *Le vite dei più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architetti* (Rome, 1991), 332–42.

35. *SM*, 71.

36. Antonio Pérez, *Segundas cartas* (Paris, 1603), 120v–121r.

37. See C. Gauna, "Giudizi e polemiche intorno a Caravaggio e Tiziano nei trattati d'arte spagnoli del XVII secolo: Carducho, Pacheco e la tradizione artistica italiana," *Ricerche di Storia dell'arte* 64 (1998): 57–78.

38. *C*, 183.

39. *Ad Herennium*, 4.8, 11; these styles were linked with, respectively, persuasion, instruction, and pleasure. Cicero, *Orator*, 21.69 and Quintilian, *Institutes*, 12.10.59.

40. *AR*, 205–6.

41. Dolce, "Dialogo," 206 and 149; Dolce, letter to Gasparo Ballini, in *Dolce's "Aretino" and Venetian Art Theory of the Cinquecento*, ed. M. Roskill (New York, 1968), 200. Dolce claimed that Michelangelo could be compared to Dante, and Raphael to Petrarch, poets who, in their turn, might be likened to the months of September and May ("Dialogo," 193–94). Although he does not say so, this is a system of correspondences in which there is space for a middle term: the month of July, the third great Tuscan author, Boccaccio, and, of course, Titian himself. Vico was adept at just this sort of parallelism. In his *Autobiography* he describes how he paired his

reading of the Tuscan triumvirate of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio with their Latin counterparts—respectively, Virgil, Horace, and Cicero (*A*, 120). If Michelangelo, Raphael, and Titian were brought into alignment with this pattern, it would place Titian with Cicero, an orator who, like Vico, compared himself to a painter, rather than with either of the poets.

42. Pietro Aretino in a letter to Boccamazza, quoted in Barocchi, *Trattati*, 1:440n4.

43. B. Lamy, *De l'art de parler* (Paris, 1679), 4–5.

44. *SM*, 71.

45. G. P. Bellori, *The Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. A. S. Wohl (Cambridge, 2005), 295.

46. For example, G. B. Agucchi, in D. Mahon, *Studies in Seicento Art and Theory* (London, 1947), 245.

47. De Dominici, *Vite*, 3:1193.

48. *SM*, 72 (cf. *SM*, 12).

49. *UR*, 375.

50. *AW*, 61.

51. *1st NS*, § 257.

52. Bellori, *Lives*, 60.

53. Ibid., 58 (Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, 6.9).

54. Bellori, *Lives*, 60.

55. Ibid., 57.

56. Ibid., 57–58.

57. Vico, *Autobiografia*, 151. Similarly, Bellori argues that although "different forms are appropriate to different figures," it is still the case that "making men more beautiful than they ordinarily are and choosing perfection, conforms with the Idea." *Lives*, 60.

58. *C*, 99.

59. *NS*, § 205.

60. Bellori, *Lives*, 59.

61. *AW*, 46.

62. *AW*, 46.

63. *AW*, 46.

64. *A*, 127.

65. Cf. Aristotle, *Poetics,* 9.9–10. See also P. A. Emison, *Creating the "Divine" Artist: from Dante to Michelangelo* (Leiden, 2004).

66. See the letters of Torquato Tasso and Niccolò Tribolo to Benedetto Varchi in P. Barocchi, *Trattati*, 1:70 and 1:79; Vasari, *Vite*, 32.

67. *HE*, 41.
68. *HE*, 42.
69. *NS*, § 819, *AW*, 104.
70. *AW*, 96.
71. *AW*, 104 and 127.
72. *AW*, 96.
73. *C*, 88.
74. *1st NS*, § 271.
75. *C*, 96.
76. See also *C*, 182 and *AW*, 124, where in the "First Response" to criticism of the book, Vico claims, "I prove that the physical forms are derived from the metaphysical ones, and that, when compared, the metaphysical forms are found to be true and the physical forms to be false."
77. Francisco de Hollanda, quoted in D. Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (Princeton, 1981), 135.
78. B. de Fontenelle, *De l'origine des fables* (Paris, 1932), 34.
79. *NS*, § 95; *1st NS*, § 293; *A*, 172.
80. *NS*, § 211 (cf. *SM*, 19; *UR*, 375; *A*, 144–45).
81. *NS*, § 209.
82. *1st NS*, § 261.
83. *NS*, § 816.
84. *NS*, § 401 (cf. § 225).
85. *1st NS*, § 328.
86. *1st NS*, § 255.
87. *NS*, § 379.
88. *NS*, § 193 and § 9.
89. *NS*, § 385.
90. *NS*, § 712.
91. *NS*, § 399.
92. *NS*, § 502 (Horace, *Odes*, 1.3.38)
93. *NS*, § 502.
94. *NS*, § 374.
95. *NS*, § 385.
96. *NS*, § 502.
97. *NS*, § 504.
98. *NS*, § 381.
99. *1st NS*, § 257.

100. *NS*, § 34.

101. *NS*, § 611.

102. *AW*, 91.

103. *NS*, § 838 and § 891.

104. *1st NS*, § 249.

105. *SM*, 43.

106. *1st NS*, § 362.

107. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 9.2–4.

108. T. Tasso, *Discourses on the Heroic Poem*, trans. M. Cavalchini and I. Samuel (Oxford, 1973), 19.

109. Ibid., 62 ("*il vero . . . al verisimile,*" cf. Bellori at note 112 below).

110. L. Castelvetro, *La poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata* (Basel, 1576), 40–41, 72, and 189.

111. Bellori, *Lives*, 60.

112. Ibid., 58.

113. *SM*, 43 and 42. Rejecting Castelvetro's claim that "history must have come first and then poetry, for history is a simple statement of the true but poetry is an imitation besides," Vico argues that "the first history must have been poetic," and that "the poets must therefore have been the first historians of the nations" (*NS*, §§ 812, 813, and 820).

114. The definition of *verisimilis* in Vico's *Collectio phrasium*, quoted in *C*, 211.

115. *SM*, 13.

116. *NS*, § 142.

117. *NS*, § 144.

118. *NS*, § 150.

119. *NS*, § 356 (cf. *NS*, § 149).

TWO: *Icastic Painting*

1. *AW*, 90.

2. Bellori, *Lives*, 72.

3. Ibid., 185.

4. Ibid., 180.

5. De Dominici, *Vite*, 1&2:970.

6. L. Scaramuccia, *Le finezze de' pennelli italiani* (Pavia, 1674), in H. Hibbard, *Caravaggio* (New York, 1983), 374–75.

7. C. N. Cochin, *Voyage d'Italie* (Paris, 1768), 1:171–72; De Dominici, *Vite*, 1&2:969.

8. Bellori, *Lives*, 61.

9. F. Susinno, *Le vite de' pittori messinesi* (1724), in Hibbard, *Caravaggio*, 386.

10. D. Bartoli, *La ricreatione del savio* (Rome, 1659), 65–66.

11. Bellori, *Lives*, 185; A. Félibien, *Entretiens* (Trevoux, 1725), 4:194.

12. V. Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura* (Madrid, 1633), trans. in E. G. Holt, *A Documentary History of Art* (New York, 1958), 2:209–10.

13. On the Neapolitan atheists, see Stone, *Vico's Cultural History*, 24–45, and J. Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 2005), 94–101.

14. *AW*, 44.

15. *A*, 126.

16. *A,* 126–27.

17. Bellori, *Lives*, 185.

18. De Dominici, *Vite*, 1&2:969.

19. Ibid.

20. On this painting, see M. Fumaroli, *L'école du silence* (Paris, 1994), 202–322.

21. De Dominici, *Vite*, 3:262.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., 3:264.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 3:284–85.

26. *UR*, 312.

27. *UR,* 11. That is why Vico rejects "philosophical criticism [e.g., that of Descartes] . . . the main purpose of which is to cleanse its fundamental truths not only of all falsity, but also of the mere suspicion of error, places upon the same plane of falsity not only false thinking, but also those secondary verities and ideas which are based on probability alone" (*SM*, 13).

28. See A. LoLordo, *Pierre Gassendi and the Birth of Early Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2009), 66.

29. W. Harvey, *De motu cordis et sanguinis*, ed. G. Keynes (London, 1928), 25 and 20. See also W. Harvey, *The Circulation of the Blood* (Oxford, 1958), 54.

30. W. Harvey, *Disputations Touching the Generation of Animals* (Oxford, 1981), 13.

31. D. Bartoli, *Del ghiaccio e della coagulatione* (Rome, 1681), 190.

32. *A*, 150.

33. *De motu cordis et sanguinis* (1647) and *Exercitationes de generatione animalium* (1651). See Mario Melchionda, "La cultura inglese nei libri della biblioteca Oratoriana dei Girolamini in Napoli," *English Miscellany* 21 (1970): 265–341 (refs., 310, 311).

34. *SM*, 6.

35. *SM*, 10.

36. Harvey, *Disputations*, 11–12 (cf. Seneca, *Epistulae*, 58).

37. J. von Sandrart, *Academie*, and G. Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, in Hibbard, *Caravaggio*, 375 and 350.

38. Bellori, *Lives*, 179.

39. F. Bologna, *L'incredulità del Caravaggio* (Turin, 2006), 138–90; J. Sawday, "Self and Selfhood in the Seventeenth Century," in R. Porter, ed., *Rewriting the Self* (London, 1997), 29–48; W. Pichler, "Il dubbio e il doppio: Le evidenze in Caravaggio," in E. Ebert-Schifferer, ed., *Caravaggio e il suo ambiente* (Cinisello Balsamo, 2007), 9–31.

40. Gospel of John 20:25.

41. F. Scannelli, *Il microcosmo della pittura* (Cesena, 1657), in Hibbard, *Caravaggio*, 360.

42. Bellori, *Lives*, 185.

43. Ibid., 59.

44. *UR*, 312.

45. *NS*, § 499.

46. *NS*, § 375.

47. *NS*, § 34.

48. *AW*, 90; *NS*, § 331; Bellori, *Lives*, 62.

49. *HE*, 69.

50. T. I. Bayer and S. P. Verene, eds., *Giambattista Vico: Keys to the "New Science"* (Ithaca, 2009), 122.

51. G. Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura* (1956), in Hibbard, *Caravaggio*, 350.

52. Bellori, *Lives*, 181.

53. Marin, *To Destroy Painting*, 160; Bellori, *Lives*, 181.

54. L. Marin, *On Representation* (Stanford, 2002), 281.

55. *AW*, 77.

56. De Dominici, *Vite*, 1&2:968 (cf. 3:262).

57. *AW*, 77.

58. *NS*, 387.

59. De Dominici, *Vite*, 1&2:969.

60. Most famously, the *diavolo di Mergellina* at Santa Maria del Parto.

61. For example, Chiesa dell'Ascensione, Chiaia.

62. B. De Dominici, *Vita del Cavaliere D. Luca Giordano* (Naples, 1729), 8.

63. Bellori, *Lives*, 184 and 185.

64. *NS*, § 502; for example, Dante places Lucifer and the giant Briareus together on the cornice of pride, *Purgatorio*, 12; Caravaggio painted himself as the giant Goliath.

65. *HE*, 46; *AW*, 77.

THREE: *Fantastic Painting*

1. Acts 9:1–9; cf. 22:6 and 22:9.

2. Acts 26:16.

3. Acts 13:47 (cf. Luke 2:32).

4. *NS*, § 1098.

5. J. de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. W. G. Ryan (Princeton, 1993), 1:120.

6. *NS*, §§ 502 and 1097.

7. 1 Cor. 15:8.

8. William Harvey, "Second Disquisition to John Riolin," in *The Circulation of the Blood* (New York, 2006), 160.

9. Voragine, *Golden Legend*, 1:120.

10. De Dominici, *Vite*, 3:1112.

11. Voragine, *Golden Legend*, 1:341–44.

12. De Dominici, *Vite*, 3:1112.

13. P. McNamara, ed., *Spirit Possession and Exorcism* (Oxford, 2011), 1:156.

14. See Stone, *Vico's Cultural History*, 20–23.

15. Carducho in Holt, *Documentary History*, 209.

16. *VV*, 121.

17. De Dominici, *Vite*, 3:1112.

18. *A*, 111.

19. *AW*, 61.

20. G. B. Vico, *Autobiografia* (Bari, 1962), 22.

21. *A*, 188.

22. *VV*, 120.

23. *AR*, 128–29. Vico refers to D. Bouhours, *La maniere de bien penser dans les ouvrages d'esprit* (Paris, 1687) discussed in Giuseppe Orsi, *Considerazioni sopra un famoso libro francese intitolato: "La maniera di ben pensare"* (Bologna, 1703).

24. *AR*, 130.

25. *A*, 117–18.

26. E. Tesauro, *Il cannocchiale aristotelico* (Venice, 1663), 75–76.

27. *VV*, 118.

28. *A*, 118.

29. F. Nicolini, *La giovanezza di Giambattista Vico* (Bologna, 1992), 160.

30. F. Bologna, *Solimena*, 73.

31. Tesauro, *Il cannocchiale*, 7–8 and 10–11.

32. *1st NS*, § 328.

33. B. De Dominici, *Vita del Cavaliere D. Luca Giordano* (Naples, 1729), 1.

34. C. C. Malvasia, *Life of the Carracci*, trans. A. Summerscale (University Park, 2000), 212.

35. Cited in W. Tatarkiewicz, ed., *History of Aesthetics* (London, 2005), 3:280.

36. De Dominici, *Luca Giordano*, 6.

37. Ibid., 7 and 8.

38. De Dominici, *Vite*, 3:770.

39. Bellori, *Lives*, 72.

40. Ibid., 71.

41. De Dominici, *Vite*, 3:1190.

42. Bellori, *Lives*, 61.

43. Ibid., 422. (cf. C. C. Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice* [Bologna, 1678], 2:359 on Guercino).

44. O. Giannone, *Giunte sulle vite dei pittori napoletani* (Naples, 1941), 164.

45. *AR*, 131.

46. P. Pino, *Dialogo di pittura* (Milan, 1954), 69.

47. Bellori, *Lives*, 61.

48. De Dominici, *Vite*, 3:1196.

49. Ibid., 3:819.

50. Ibid., 3:834.

51. Ibid., 3:1170.

52. Ibid., 3:1121.

53. Ibid., 3:625.

54. Ibid., 3:1173.

55. F. A. Gravina (not, as is sometimes supposed, his more famous brother, G. V. Gravina) in G. Della Casa, *Opere* (Venice, 1728), 2:xii.

56. De Dominici, *Vite*, 3:1195.

57. *NS*, § 99.

58. F. Bologna, "La dimensione europea della cultura artistica napoletana," in C. de Seta, ed., *Arti e civiltá del settecento a Napoli* (Bari, 1982), 50–51.

59. R. Ajello, "Dal 'Facere' al 'factum': Sui rapporti tra Vico e il suo tempo," *Bollettino del Centro di Studi Vichiani* 12–13 (1982–83): 358.

60. For example, *A*, 119.

61. De Dominici, *Vite*, 3:1122.

62. Ibid.

63. C. Ripa, *Iconologia* (Milan, 1992), 394–95.

FOUR: *Theological Painting*

1. *NS*, § 1–42.

2. *UR*, 30; *NS*, § 362.

3. C. Ripa, *La novissima iconologia* (Padua, 1625), 590–91.

4. *NS*, § 41.

5. G. B. Vico, *La scienza nuova* (1730) (Naples, 2004), 55–56.

6. *NS*, § 177.

7. *NS*, § 179. It is tempting to see a Hobbesian reference in the upturned urn inscribed "Lemurum fabula," for in the fourth book of *Leviathan*, Hobbes denies the immortality of the soul and compares the Roman Catholic Church to the kingdom of the fairies (*Leviathan*, 47).

8. *1st NS*, § 13 (cf. *NS*, § 1097).

9. *A*, 122

10. *HE*, 127.

11. *NS*, § 2.

12. *UR*, 34.

13. *UR*, 308.

14. Bellori, *Lives*, 57.

15. *NS*, § 1110.

16. *NS*, § 356 (cf. *NS*, § 149).

17. *1st NS*, § 11.

18. *UR*, 371.

19. G. Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, trans. G. Bull (Harmondsworth, 1965), 46.

20. Bellori, *Lives*, 71.

21. De Dominici, *Vite*, 1&2:30.

22. Stefano Pierguidi, "'Li soggetti furono sopra la pittura': Luca Giordano, Carlo Maratti e il Trionfo della pittura napoletana di Paolo de Matteis per il Marchese del Carpio," in *Ricerche sul '600 napoletano: Saggi e documenti, 2008* (Naples, 2009), 93–99.

23. *1st NS*, § 257.

24. *1st NS*, § 258.

25. B. Croce, *Un paradiso abitato da diavoli* (Milan, 2006).

26. A. Palomino, *El museo pictórico y escuela óptica* (Madrid, 1947), 922.

27. De Dominici, *Vite*, 3:1375.

28. *El divino pintor: La creación de María de Guadalupe en el taller celestial*, exhibition catalog, Mexico City, 2001.

29. *HE*, 41.

30. De Dominici, *Vite*, 3:1018–19.

31. *NS*, § 32.

Epilogue

1. G. Leopardi, *Zibaldone*, 734–35 (Mar. 8, 1821); "A un vincitore nel pallone" (Nov. 1821), *Canti* (London, 2008), 38–40. Leopardi first mentions Vico in the *Zibaldone* on April 16, 1821, though he appears not to have read the *New Science* for himself until 1828. See V. Placella, "Leopardi e Vico," in *Leopardi e la Letteratura italiana dal Duecento al Seicento* (Florence, 1978), 731–57.

2. F. Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, trans. W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York, 1968), §§ 495, 544, and 853 (references are to section numbers).

3. See H. Wagenvoort, "Die Entstehung von Nietzsches Geburt der Tragödie," *Mnemosyne* 12 (1959): 13–23.

4. J. Michelet, *Bible de l'humanité* (Paris, 1864), 412–13.

5. G. B. Vico, *Principes de la philosophie de l'histoire*, trans. J. Michelet (Paris, 1827); and *Grundzüge einer neuen wissenschaft über die gemeinschaftliche natur der völker*, trans. W. E. Weber (Leipzig, 1822).

6. *NS*, §§ 401 and 404.

7. F. Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense," in *The Nietzsche Reader*, ed. K. Ansell-Pearson and D. Large (Oxford, 2005), 118.

8. *NS*, § 391 (cf. *NS*, § 711); Vico, *Grundzüge*, 238. A. Orsucci, "Some of Nietzsche's Studies on the Problem of Truth and Falsehood: Ancient Mythology, Biology and Linguistics," in *Cultures of Lying*, ed. J. Mecke (Glienicke, 2007), 139, gives H. Nissen, *Das Templum* (Berlin, 1869), 8, as the likely source, but the context is wholly different.

9. *NS*, § 779.

10. Nietzsche, "Truth and Lies," 117 and 119.

11. Ibid., 118.

12. F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York, 1974), 221.

13. F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth, 1969), 47–48.

14. F. Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, trans. D. Smith (Oxford, 1996), essay 3, § 25.

15. F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York, 1966), § 34; emphasis in original (references are to section numbers).

16. Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, § 853.

17. Ibid., § 377.

18. Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 192.

19. Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, § 1011.

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